United Nations S/PV.8409

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8409th meeting
Monday, 26 November 2018, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Wu Haitao	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Violation of the borders of the Russian Federation

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18-39781 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I am making this statement on behalf of the United States, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

We stand united in opposing Russia's attempt to discuss yesterday's serious escalation in the Kerch Strait under an agenda item entitled "Violation of the borders of the Russian Federation". We strongly support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. We want to express our deep concern about the incident, which represents a dangerous escalation and violation of international law. We look forward to discussing Russia's provocation under the appropriate agenda item. We therefore urge all Council members to vote against the adoption of the agenda as proposed by Russia.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In calling for this extraordinary meeting of the Security Council, Russia bases its position on the Council's provisional rules of procedure, in which rule 2 clearly states that the President shall call a meeting of the Security Council at the request of any member of the Council at any time to consider any issue. It is crucial that we understand that the Ukrainian delegation's counter-demand that we initiate a separate meeting under a different agenda item is nothing but an attempt to avoid responsibility for undermining international security. The agenda item proposed by Ukraine is inappropriate. I would like to ask if anyone has even read the letter of the Ukrainian Permanent Representative in question. The situation described in it refers us to events of four years ago and has nothing to do with what happened in the region yesterday.

What did happen on 25 November was that the Kyiv regime made a direct threat to international peace and security by ordering the Ukrainian Naval Forces to carry out an aggressive act of provocation with regard to the Russian Federation's State border, violating key provisions not only of international maritime law but also of common law, including the Charter of the United Nations, provisions that require that all States respect other States' sovereignty. The fact that this violation occurred — and moreover through manoeuvring in a narrow strait, a fairly dangerous method — could and did create risks to the normal movement of vessels in those waters. Needless to say, such banditry had to be stopped, and the international community has to understand where Kyiv's actions are leading.

We urge our partners on the Security Council not to take on any responsibility for the Ukrainian authorities' dangerous behaviour. If this forum continues to be used to cover for the Ukrainian regime's military provocations and to blame Russia for exercising its right to defend its borders, the Council's authority will suffer irreparable damage.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In view of the request and comments made by members of the Security Council, I intend to put the provisional agenda to the vote.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the provisional agenda for today's meeting. I shall put the provisional agenda to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Kuwait, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Peru

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The provisional agenda received 4 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 4 abstentions. The provisional agenda has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We regret the result of the vote. However, I would like to emphasize that no one can prevent Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, from

raising issues in the Council that we consider important, and doing it under agenda items that those issues relate to. This vote will have no effect on that, a vote in which States that claim to have self-sufficient and independent foreign policies, in obedience to the herd instinct and their fear of their Big Brothers in Washington, come out in support a scenario that is contrary to the principles of the Security Council and its rules of procedure.

Now they are more concerned about which agenda item to hold today's meeting under than about how to solve the problem. Frankly, this is reminiscent of playground arguments and these members are now bringing discredit on the Security Council in the same way that the Ukrainians' provocative actions bring discredit on the General Assembly. And yesterday, after Russia asked that this Security Council meeting be convened, our Western partners tried to present the whole thing as if it was Ukraine that had requested it rather than Russia. That is pettiness, gentlemen, pettiness on a pitiful scale.

Since they have prioritized procedural issues over the interests of the matter at hand, I will confine myself to this statement in explanation of vote and will not make a statement in the meeting convened under the Ukrainian letter, which is an agenda item that is not appropriate to our discussion.

On 25 November, three Ukrainian naval vessels illegally crossed Russia's State border, bound for the Kerch Strait. They did not respond to the legal demands of the ships and patrol boats of Russia's FSB border guards and Black Sea fleet and conducted a dangerous manoeuvre that created a threat to the normal movement of vessels in those waters. As I said, these actions violated the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law, including articles 19 and 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, which determine the right of coastal States to ensure safety in the maritime space, as well as the rules of peaceful passage through the territorial waters of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea. We regard those actions as a violation of Russia's sovereignty.

Those illegal actions forced Russian border guards to use force. Thanks to their restraint and high degree of professionalism, fatalities were avoided. The three Ukrainian servicemen injured in the incident were given the necessary medical assistance, and their lives were not threatened. The responsibility for the incident belongs to those who gave the vessels their criminal order to proceed. The ships that committed the violation have been detained at a Russian port, and criminal proceedings have been initiated.

Of late Kyiv has refrained from using military means to openly violate Russia's national borders. We had bilateral agreements in the Sea of Azov, which is an inland waterway for both Russia and Ukraine, to which Kyiv adhered with no problems of any kind. After construction finished on the Crimean bridge in September, literally two months ago, Ukrainian naval vessels passed freely under the bridge from Odessa to Berdyansk with the help of Russian pilots. In other words, the Ukrainians are well aware of the procedure for passage through the Kerch Strait and had abided by it until now. The control procedure takes no more than three hours and is part of Russian border guards' legal right to ensure security in Russia's territorial waters, including — and I want to emphasize this — because of an ongoing situation created by threats on the part of Ukrainian radicals who have publicly promised to blow up the Crimean bridge.

What changed yesterday? Why did three Ukrainian vessels illegally invade Russia's sovereign waters in order to be detained? This provocation was planned in advance, right before our eyes, and with the full connivance of Western States, which in practice long ago gave their Kyiv clients carte blanche for any act. In August, Mr. Yelchenko, Ukraine's representative to the United Nations, who is here today, announced preparations of what he called "unpleasant surprises" for Russia. At the beginning of November his delegation submitted a draft resolution on the Sea of Azov to the General Assembly that included accusations about Russia's militarization of the region, an anti-Russian document for which they had previously launched an advance campaign to win support. And in order to make sure that their propaganda really succeeds, they have now decided to bring in the Security Council. On top of that, in the past few months, with support from Washington, Kyiv has been aggressively fanning the flames of this subject of the so-called militarization of the Azov Sea, and all of this despite the fact that Russia has no plans to establish a new naval base there. The military forces and facilities there are commensurate with the task of providing security for the Crimean bridge.

The Kyiv authorities certainly do not need all these manipulations of international organizations to solve their country's problems. On 21 November, those who

follow the rapidly evolving tragedy of Ukraine marked that sad date, the fifth anniversary of the beginning of the so-called Maidan protests. It is obvious to all today that the Ukrainians have lost whatever remained of their trust in those who pushed them into the so-called revolution of dignity. Over the past five years, everything that our neighbours were proud of has vanished. Everything — the economy, industry, the social arena — is ruined.

Throughout those five years, and contrary to the interests of Ukrainians, the West, and the United States of America above all, has been stubbornly pushing through its geopolitical project in Ukraine in various ways, from distributing cookies to pouring billions of dollars into facilities for its own benefit. Its main mission was to bring fratricidal internal strife to a traditionally peaceful Ukraine and foment a quarrel between two fraternal peoples, Russians and Ukrainians, thereby weakening Russia. However, it is already obvious that those plans have failed to be fully realized and that those who participated in them have lost all authority in the eyes of the Ukrainian people. The best proof of that is President Poroshenko's extremely low popularity ratings, which anyone would be embarrassed to head into elections with. And those elections are just around the corner, four months away.

So then how does one hold on to power? Simple. By organizing an act of provocation and once again blaming Russia for everything. By inflating one's ratings, by once again presenting oneself to voters as the nation's saviour from that mythical Russian aggression, and by imposing martial law. That is what the Kyiv authorities are doing right now. And we all understand the reason for this martial law and its predictable continuation perfectly well. It is in order to cancel the elections, whatever Mr. Poroshenko may say to the contrary.

In the past five years, through brainwashing and total anti-Russian propaganda, they have succeeded in sowing enmity and hatred for Russia in some parts of Ukrainian society, using undemocratic methods very actively to impose their opinion on the passive majority. However, during that time, what those here have never managed to do is to sow hostility to Ukrainians on the part of my compatriots. We still love them, believe in their wisdom and take them in willingly. We listen to their stories of the suffering, misery and wrongdoings that are happening in that once rich and successful country, from which people today are scattering in every direction in the realization that this ship is sinking. Yes, gentlemen, that five-year anti-Russian political project — one might as well call it Anti-Russia — is a fiasco for all to see, and everyone here knows very well what the real pace — as opposed to the declared one — is of the so-called Maidan reforms and other dangerous and destructive processes that are pushing Ukraine ever closer to the abyss.

In such circumstances, there is one reliable method, well-known to every barely literate political technologist, that bankrupt politicians clinging to power all over the world resort to — war. That is why it has been impossible to put out the flames of the fratricidal war in the Donbas, and why it has nothing to do with that mythical Russian aggression. It is because the people in this room are extinguishing those flames by dousing them with petrol made of Ukrainian nationalism and Russophobia. And that is despite the fact that a plan for combating that destructive fire — the Minsk agreements — was developed and approved, including by the Security Council, long ago. It is no secret that if it wanted to, Washington could resolve the so-called conflict in eastern Ukraine in 10 minutes simply by giving the appropriate command to its clients in Kyiv.

And now, as the March elections are approaching, the bankrupt Maidan team is in dire need of a serious worsening of the situation, and ideally a full-on war. Without that, it has no hope of remaining in power. It needs another shot of anti-Russian dope so that the people who have been mired in poverty for the past five years will once again believe that all their troubles are due not to their rulers and their Western puppeteers, but to Russia.

Unlike others, we in Russia are not afraid to call things by their proper names. We do not lower our eyes in shame, as our Polish colleagues do, for example, as they see how people in their neighbouring State glorify those who during the Second World War exterminated hundreds of thousands of Poles, Jews and Russians in the most cruel way. Today, the Ukrainian clients of some of our colleagues daily discredit the very universal values that they so loudly promote and, incidentally, that we in Russia sincerely believe in. We introduce and develop them ourselves, without any decrees or fanfare.

As far as Russia's State borders are concerned, there is no need to worry. Our country has never struck the first blow, but we do know how to stand up for

ourselves. The people of Crimea, like Russia's other regions, are well protected.

We know that the delegations that initiated today's vote are waiting to state their opinions at the next meeting, and we know that they will repeat their well-known mantra of what they call aggression, annexation and occupation. But we also know what they will not say, about the fact that the regime in Kyiv does not need peace. It is not trying to create a decent life for its people and it is not interested in a dialogue with its own people in the east. It is not interested in the so-called European values that it is forever touting. The only thing that the Kyiv politicians are interested in is maintaining their own power and justifying their failures as the result of acts of so-called Russian aggression. And the only thing that the Western sponsors of that regime are interested in is maintaining their dominance by undermining good-neighbourly relations among the fraternal peoples of Europe, Asia, Africa and the rest of the world through the ancient Roman principle of divide and rule.

Instead of repeating the past, we should learn from its mistakes and build a new world based on multilateralism, mutual respect and indivisible security. We urge everyone to do so alongside us.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8410

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8410th meeting

Monday, 26 November 2018, 11.35 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wu Haitao	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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18-39769 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: Less than a month ago, when I last briefed the Security Council on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.8386), I brought to the Council's attention the reports of increased tensions in the Sea of Azov and underlined the need to avoid any risk of escalation, provocation or miscalculation. Regrettably, a serious security incident took place yesterday near Crimea, close to the Sea of Azov. I wish to underline that the United Nations currently cannot independently verify the circumstances surrounding the incident. However, reports indicate that an incident involving three Ukrainian vessels and at least one Russian vessel took place on 25 November near the Kerch Strait when the former attempted to enter the Sea Azov. Although the exact number remains unclear, several Ukrainian sailors were reportedly injured in the event. Ukraine claims that it had previously notified the Russian Federation of its intent to sail those vessels to the Ukrainian port of Mariupol in the Sea of Azov, which requires entry through the narrow Kerch Strait. Meanwhile, the Russian Federation claims that Ukraine provoked the incident and that Russia acted in accordance with international law. According to media reports, the Ukrainian ships and their personnel are currently being held by the Russian authorities. Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council has since recommended the declaration of martial law. We understand that the decision remains subject to ratification by the Verkhovna Rada, which is meeting today.

The waters of the Sea of Azov were claimed as being historically internal waters of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation where vessels of the two countries have enjoyed freedom of navigation. However, tensions have risen in and around those waters since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which has been the subject of several General Assembly resolutions. In September 2016, arbitral proceedings under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) were instituted by Ukraine against the Russian Federation with regard to

> "a dispute concerning coastal State rights in the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, and Kerch Strait".

The Russian Federation argues that the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait are not subject to the UNCLOS arbitral tribunal.

The United Nations is deeply concerned about this escalation of tensions, which is taking place in the broader context of the conflict in eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea. During our previous briefing to the Council we urged all parties to avoid any unilateral steps that could deepen the divide or depart from of the spirit and letter of the Minsk agreements. In that context, I wish to reiterate that the United Nations fully supports the lead role of the Normandy Four, the Trilateral Contact Group, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other key actors to find a peaceful settlement. I also wish to reiterate our call for renewed and constructive action by all those concerned to overcome the apparent impasse in diplomatic negotiations. The United Nations underlines the need to fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Regrettably, yesterday's incident only threatens to cause the situation in and around Ukraine to deteriorate further. We strongly urge both the Russian Federation and Ukraine to refrain from any ratcheting up of actions or rhetoric. We remind both of the need to contain this incident so as to prevent a serious escalation that may have unforeseen consequences. At this juncture, the immediate de-escalation of tensions in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea is required. It is critical that earnest attempts be made to find a peaceful settlement to the situation, based on the diplomatic and legal means

available and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): This morning I spoke with President Trump and Secretary Pompeo, and my statement reflects the concerns at the highest level of the American Government.

For the past four years, the international community has spoken with a strong, clear and largely united voice denouncing Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The United States, the European Union, its member States and many other countries have imposed sanctions against Russia for its unacceptable conduct in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. Sunday's outrageous violation of sovereign Ukrainian territory is part of a pattern of Russian behaviour that includes the purported annexation of Crimea and abuses against countless Ukrainians in Crimea, as well as stoking a conflict that has taken the lives of more than 10,000 people in eastern Ukraine and shows no sign of decreasing.

What we witnessed this past weekend is yet another reckless Russian escalation. Let us be clear about what is known. Ukrainian ships set sail from one Ukrainian port to another Ukrainian port. They attempted to do so by the only possible way to go — through the Kerch Strait. Both Russia and Ukraine use the Strait routinely, but this time Russia decided to prevent the passage of the Ukrainian ships, rammed them and then opened fire on them. That is no way for a law-abiding, civilized nation to act. Impeding Ukraine's lawful transit through the Kerch Strait is a violation under international law. It is an arrogant act that the international community must condemn and will never accept. In May, the United States condemned Russia's construction and opening of the Kerch Strait Bridge between Russia and occupied Crimea. In August, the United States condemned Russia's harassment of international shipping in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait.

The United States will continue to stand with the people of Ukraine against the Russian aggression. It is our expectation that our European partners will lead that effort through the Normandy Four format, which we support. We call on Russia to respect its international obligations and not obstruct or harass Ukraine's transit in the Kerch Strait and to de-escalate the tensions that it has created. As President Trump has said many times, the United States would welcome a normal relationship with Russia, but outlaw actions like this one continue to make that impossible. The United States will maintain its Crimea-related sanctions against Russia. Further Russian escalation of this kind will only make matters worse. It will further undermine Russia's standing in the world. It will further sour Russia's relations with the United States and many other countries. It will further increase tensions with Ukraine. In the name of international peace and security, Russia must immediately cease its unlawful conduct and respect the navigational rights and freedoms of all States.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): May I just start by saying that I was disappointed by the Russian representative's explanation of vote in the previous meeting (see S/PV.8409). As he himself stated, he did not actually make an explanation of vote, but a substantive statement. In doing so Russia showed contempt for the Security Council and its members by not accepting a procedural vote by the Council. Russia has regularly discussed Ukraine here under a different agenda item. In this instance Russia deliberately chose a provocative title for the meeting, which it knew that it would lose. I ask myself why. I assume that Russia knows how weak its position of substance is, and thereby hopes to turn attention on process and play the part of the victim. It will not work because yesterday, by Moscow's own admission, Russian vessels opened fire on and seized three Ukrainian vessels approaching the Sea of Azov. We are deeply concerned about the six injured Ukrainians and the 23 others who have been detained by the Russian Federation. We call for their immediate release.

We condemn Russia's deplorable use of military force. This further demonstrates Russia's ongoing contempt for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its contempt for the global rules-based international system, which the Organization serves to uphold. It follows Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its construction of the Kerch Strait Bridge in May, which constitutes a further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Yesterday's action follows months of Russian harassment of international shipping in the Sea of Azov, presumably aimed at destabilizing the Ukrainian economy. Russia's actions are not in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 2003 Russia-

Ukraine bilateral agreement that provides for the freedom of passage for each State's vessels in the Sea of Azov, including military ships. Russia's actions must stop immediately. International shipping must be allowed free passage in the Sea of Azov. All parties must exercise restraint.

We have seen this game before. Russia wants to consolidate its illegal annexation of Crimea and annex the Sea of Azov. Russia seems to hope the international community will simply acquiesce and accept this as a new reality. Well, we will not. The United Kingdom's position is clear. We do not and will not recognize the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia. The General Assembly made its position clear in resolution 68/262, of 27 March 2014, and we continue to fully support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters, which is why on 31 July the European Union sanctioned six new entities in connection with Russia opening the Kerch Bridge. We continue to work closely with international partners to ensure the sanctions remain in place as long as Russia's control of the peninsula continues.

Russia's illegal annexation constituted a deliberate violation of a number of international agreements and commitments, including Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act, the Budapest Memorandum and the 1997 Russia-Ukraine Treaty of Friendship. But that is just a start. Russia's actions are also causing human suffering. Appalling human rights abuses in the Crimean peninsula continue with the widespread persecution of such minority groups as the Crimean Tatars. The Crimean Tatars face regular harassment and risk arrest, detentions and threats of seizure of their property. They have had their rights of worship, assembly and expression restricted.

The Crimean Tatars are not the only people suffering at the hands of Russia. Anyone who expresses even mild discontent or voices their opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea risks being charged with extremism and given a lengthy prison sentence, which has forced many into exile. Russia continues to ignore calls by the General Assembly for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Crimea.

We remain clear in our support of the rules-based international system, which Russia continues to flout. Russia must not be allowed to rewrite history by establishing new realities on the ground. But this is sadly not the first time Russia has indulged in such reckless and provocative acts this year. Russia was responsible for a chemical-weapon attack on British soil, and its agents were caught red-handed in The Hague. Russia has steadily increased tension in the Sea of Azov and has now, by its own admission, fired on Ukrainian ships, injuring sailors on board. Those are not the actions of a responsible country dedicated to the maintenance of international peace and security and to upholding the United Nations Charter.

As my Prime Minister recently made clear, like others in this Chamber today, we remain open to a different relationship with Russia, one where Russia desists from these attacks that undermine international treaties and international security and refrains from actions that undermine the territorial integrity of its neighbours, and instead acts together with the international community to fulfil the common responsibilities we share as permanent members of the Security Council. We hope that the Russian State chooses to take this path. However, Russia's actions over the weekend do not give much ground for hope.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): In view of the commitment of the French and German authorities to resolving the crisis in Ukraine within the framework of the Normandy format, this statement is made on behalf of France and Germany.

The maritime incidents that occurred yesterday are serious and cause us great concern. As we have just heard, the Kerch Strait, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov were the scene of violent manoeuvres yesterday that have considerably increased tensions and the risk of escalation, thereby highlighting the instability of the region. Russian forces reported that they had collided with and then seized with force three Ukrainian warships that were attempting to cross the Strait. Six Ukrainian sailors were wounded. We are aware of nothing that could justify that use of force.

As indicated this morning by our authorities, as well as the Permanent Representatives of the European members of the Security Council visiting Beijing, we express our deep concern at the actions of the past 24 hours and call on the parties to exercise the utmost restraint. France and Germany call in particular on Russia to restore and respect, in accordance with international law of the sea, the freedom of passage in the Kerch Strait, as well as the right of access to the Sea of Azov, which is currently temporarily blocked, and to

act immediately to de-escalate tensions. We also call on Russia to release the detained Ukrainian seamen as soon as possible and return the seized vessels.

I wish to assure Ukraine of our solidarity and strongly reaffirm the commitment of France and Germany to full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Yesterday's incidents are the direct consequence of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014, in violation of international law. In that regard, we recall that we condemned Russia's construction of the Kerch Bridge, which contributes to depriving Ukraine of full access to its maritime areas in the Sea of Azov.

Yesterday's serious incidents also serve to highlight the need for a lasting solution to the situation throughout eastern Ukraine. France and Germany will continue to mobilize as they have done for the past four years to calm the situation in eastern Ukraine and promote a long-term resolution of the crisis, through the Normandy format.

Let us be clear: all parties, in particular Russia, must respect the commitments they themselves have made. The full implementation of the Minsk agreements, to which both Russia and Ukraine have committed themselves, remains the only way to find a peaceful and lasting solution to this conflict, which has been going on for almost five years.

France and Germany will continue to stand by the side of the Ukrainian people scarred in recent years by the Donbas conflict and the illegal annexation of Crimea. The Council may rest assured that we will continue our efforts in this direction, within the framework of the Normandy format and in all appropriate forums.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): Let me echo the delegation of the United Kingdom by stressing that it is also our understanding that the Russian delegation's delivery of a de facto full and substantial statement after its request had been rejected did run against the practices and procedures of the Security Council.

We have gathered in this Chamber today to discuss an additional demonstration of disregard for international law and an attempt to undermine efforts aimed at achieving peace in Eastern Europe. Russia has just added another dimension to the conflict in Ukraine.

During the previous Security Council briefing on Ukraine (see S/PV.8386) we expressed our concern about the development of military capabilities taking place in the Crimea and the Sea of Azov. For several months Russia has delayed hundreds of commercial vessels attempting to reach Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov via the Kerch Strait for extended periods and at great economic cost for Ukraine. Now Russia attacks Ukrainian vessels, stating the need for protection of "Russian territory". Further militarization and an increase of tensions brings more instability to a region that has already suffered enough.

After the aggression against Georgia, the illegal occupation of Crimea, the fuelling of the conflict in Donbas, the building of the Kerch Bridge without the consent of the authorities in Kyiv, and the farcical elections in the separatist regions on 11 November, Russia has now violated Ukraine's navigation rights. We strongly condemn Russia's aggressive actions and call on its authorities to respect international law. We also call on both sides to exercise restraint in the current situation, which may further jeopardize the stability of European security.

This State-to-State conflict initiated and fuelled by Russia has one aim: to destabilize Ukraine. We therefore urge the United Nations system as a whole to give proper attention to this active armed conflict. We cannot turn a blind eye to this situation just because one of the sides in the conflict is a permanent member of the Security Council.

Russia's military actions in Crimea and the Sea of Azov should serve as a lesson learned as to what this State is capable of in order to safeguard its critical infrastructure in Europe. Persistent violations of international law, including bilateral agreements, lead directly to the imposition of forced solutions aimed at controlling Russia's interests concerning the existing communication and energy infrastructure as well as such infrastructure under construction and that being planned.

Let me reiterate that Poland strongly supports the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We do not recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea. We underline the need for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements, which is the only path to a lasting solution to the conflict in and around Ukraine.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): Sweden is deeply concerned about the escalation in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. Blocking maritime traffic to and from Ukrainian ports, using military force, is a

serious violation of international law. This violation comes against the backdrop of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol in 2014 and the finalization of the bridge across the Kerch Strait earlier this year, both blatant violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We fully support the Ukrainian request for a Council meeting in the light of the latest developments. Any other country would have done the same and would have expected the issue to be handled as the threat to international peace and security that it constitutes.

Russia's unwarranted and disproportionate checks of ships passing through the Strait has been ongoing for months already. We regret that Russia has ignored the calls from Ukraine and the international community to abide by international law and allow free passage through the Kerch Strait and instead has opted to escalate the situation further. In a situation that is already tense, this behaviour is deeply irresponsible.

As a first step, the naval vessels and crew members who have been detained should be immediately and unconditionally released. This would be an important step towards de-escalation.

We urge Russia to act in accordance with international law. Let me underline that there can be no doubt that Russia has international legal obligations to refrain from blocking access to Ukrainian ports in the Azov Sea and elsewhere, as well as to respect Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe principles and commitments. We call on Russia to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its navigational rights.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this emergency meeting of the Security Council given the serious nature of the incidents that took place on Sunday 25 November between the Russian naval forces and Ukrainian vessels in the Kerch Strait.

We wish also to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her briefing.

In a region already affected by a conflict that observers say has killed approximately 10,000 people since it started in 2014, this upsurge in tension could further exacerbate the threat of a new military confrontation with disastrous humanitarian consequences.

My country deplores this incident, which, like those noted in recent months, continues to contribute to the climate of mistrust between the Russian and Ukrainian parties and to undermine the peace efforts made by the international community to restore peace and stability to the region.

My country would like to take the opportunity provided by this meeting to urge the Russian and Ukrainian parties to show restraint in order to avert a military escalation in the region. It urges them to refrain from any actions that could lead to a new and larger-scale conflict.

My delegation deplores the lack of progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements under the Normandy format and urges the Russian and Ukrainian parties to promote a peaceful settlement to their dispute. In this regard, it expresses its support for the observer mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and for the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination in their efforts to de-escalate the conflict. Furthermore, my delegation urges the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination to play its role of supporting OSCE observers and monitoring the ceasefire agreements in order to ensure the effective implementation of the Minsk agreements.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Côte d'Ivoire's support for all efforts under way to find a negotiated political solution to the crisis in Ukraine.

My country urges all protagonists to respect their commitments to ensuring the effective implementation of the Minsk agreements and of resolution 2202 (2015), which endorses them.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I thank the Chinese presidency for convening today's emergency meeting on the latest developments in the Azov Sea.

Kazakhstan, as a member of the Council, is open to dialogue and is ready to debate international security issues in the context of transparent discussions in order to prevent international conflicts. Taking this into account, as well as the need to consider the matter within the framework of the Security Council, our delegation was ready to vote in favour of both requests, that of Ukraine and that of Russia.

Kazakhstan considers both peoples — those of Ukraine and those of Russia — as the inhabitants of brotherly nations to our country that have shared a common history. In this regard, we urge both parties

to refrain from any steps that could lead to a further escalation of tensions in bilateral relations.

It is of special importance to our State that Ukraine remain sovereign, stable and independent. Kazakhstan is ready to assist both nations — the Russian Federation and Ukraine — to overcome this crisis in their relations.

Kazakhstan adheres to a balanced approach of resolving the Ukrainian crisis through peaceful negotiations and a mediation process based on the key principles and norms of international law and the United Nations Charter. My country continues to take part in multilateral consultations in seeking a settlement of this issue. We are determined to work closely with all members of the Council without political expediency and in an open, objective, responsible and constructive way.

It should be noted that in the past our country contributed to the launching of the Normandy format and to the eventual conclusion of the Minsk agreements. Kazakhstan has also repeatedly expressed its readiness to render all-round assistance in the process, supporting a peaceful settlement in the south-eastern part of Ukraine and fostering robust relations between Ukraine and Russia.

In this vein, our delegation is concerned that the negotiation process to resolve the Ukrainian conflict has been suspended during the past months, as evidenced by the lack of higher-level contacts in the Normandy format. This suspension has the potential to spark new and negative developments in the region.

In that respect, it is with regret that we learned of the incident between the Russian and Ukrainian navy vessels in the Kerch Strait that took place yesterday, 25 November. Kazakhstan urges both sides to act with the utmost restraint so as to de-escalate the situation between the two States. We consider this to be the only viable existing mechanism to resolve the issue in a peaceful way through refraining from any kind of negative action.

An incident such as this could drastically raise the chances of an unintended spark setting the region on fire. Both Governments must urgently step in and try to negotiate a deal to de-escalate the situation, with possible assistance from the international community.

We believe that sustainable peace and the full-fledged normalization of relations between both countries can also be achieved through the establishment of confidence-building measures in the security and economic areas. We should not allow any further escalation of tensions, as they could lead to active warfare in this new area.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

We express our concern about the events that took place yesterday in the Sea of Azov. We reiterate that the military option is in no way not a solution to any controversy. In that regard, we call on the parties to create appropriate conditions to avoid the escalation of tensions, refrain from action that encourage violence, comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and respect international law and international maritime law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In that regard, we call on the parties to work for a peaceful solution through dialogue, taking into account the package of measures for implementing the Minsk agreements, in order to achieve a balance of interests, without neglecting the principles of preventive diplomacy and good offices aimed at identifying a negotiated political solution.

We also stress that both the international community and the Council must make every effort necessary to maintain international peace and security, which in the long term will be beneficial to the region, with the parties themselves resolving their differences. Finally, we call on the leaders of both sides to overcome the divisions of the past, putting peace first for the benefit of their peoples, and urge the international community to heed the concerns of all parties, with a neutral and equitable approach in pursuit of lasting stability.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and the briefing given by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo.

Peru is deeply concerned by the recent incident in the Kerch Strait and its potential repercussions for the complex and unstable relations between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and for regional stability. We regret the recent escalation and greater tensions between the countries. In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, Peru reiterates the need to respect the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. We call on the parties, both of which are represented here, to act with restraint, avoid further escalation and always act in pursuant

of international law and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her briefing on developments in the Sea of Azov.

The recent escalation of tensions in the Sea of Azov is very worrying. We call on both sides to exercise self-restraint and undertake all measures necessary to diffuse military tensions in the Sea of Azov. We call on them to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and urge them to demonstrate the necessary political will and to renew their commitment to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements in order to resolve the conflict and maintain security and stability in the region.

We reiterate our commitment to respecting Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and to not interfere in its internal affairs. We hope that the parties involved will fully implement resolution 2202 (2015), the Minsk agreements for peace, and presidential statement S/PRST/2018/12 of 6 June. We also hope that both sides will seek to arrive at a comprehensive and balanced solution to this issue through dialogue, as stipulated by Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations. We stress the need to do so within the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group in order to achieve immediate progress towards implementing the Minsk agreements.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thank Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for her briefing on the latest developments in the situation concerning the Kerch Strait.

On 30 October (see S/PV.8386) and on several other occasions, Equatorial Guinea encouraged the parties to respect the full implementation of the Minks agreements and to refrain from actions that could aggravate and destabilize the situation in the country and in the region. That is why my delegation regrets the recent events in the Sea of Azov with respect to the situation in question, and notes with great concern the escalation of the situation that led to the convening of this meeting.

The situation in the Sea of Azov poses new threats to stability in the region. That is why reducing tension so as to avoid an escalation of the situation is a top priority at this time and requires the cooperation and resolve of both parties. In that regard, we call on the parties concerned to remain calm and refrain from taking any action that could lead to a further escalation of the situation. We also encourage them to resolve the situation through political and diplomatic dialogue for a peaceful and political solution to the crisis.

Given the complexity and fragility of the situation, we believe that it is important to harmonize the efforts of the parties. We therefore believe that only the coordinated and harmonized efforts of the parties involved will guarantee a fair and definitive solution to the situation. In that regard, my delegation urges the parties to find a political solution through dialogue and negotiations, based on respect for international law, the principles of international relations and the maintenance of international regional peace, security and stability. We emphasize the need for the parties to respect the Charter of the United Nations and to resolve their disputes in accordance with existing bilateral and multilateral agreements.

In conclusion, we remind the parties once again that a solution to the issue can be achieved only by peaceful means, through direct, frank and inclusive negotiations. In that regard, we urge the parties to exercise the utmost restraint in order to defuse the situation, intensify their efforts and commit themselves to avoiding actions that could escalate tensions.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): Let me first of all thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

We have followed the situation around the Sea of Azov and we are concerned by the rapid escalation of the situation in the area. It is vital that all efforts be made to reduce tension. We support today's call of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from taking actions that would further undermine the security and stability of the area. We also agree that there is a need for the parties to address their differences through political and diplomatic means.

On the issue of Ukraine, we once again reiterate our support for the implementation of the Minsk agreements for the peaceful settlement of the crisis. We believe that it is absolutely imperative that the parties remain fully committed to the implementation of the Minsk agreements and strictly adhere to resolution

2202 (2015), which endorsed the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): Let me start by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her update on the situation in and around the Sea of Azov.

At the outset, I would like to support the procedural point that was put forward by the United Kingdom and Poland. In line with General Assembly resolution 68/262, adopted by an overwhelming majority on 27 March 2014, let me reiterate our full support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Less than a month ago (see S/PV.8386), we sat in the Chamber to discuss the situation in Ukraine. It is clear that the volatile security situation in that part of the world needs to be addressed urgently. I will focus on three issues today: first, the events of Sunday 25 November; secondly, the context in which those events are taking place; and, thirdly, steps towards de-escalation.

With regard to my first point, the Kingdom of the Netherlands is deeply concerned about yesterday's developments in the Black Sea region. The blocking of the Kerch Strait by the Russian Federation, denying access to Ukrainian ports, constitutes a violation of international law. That is not acceptable. As we stated in the Council meeting of 30 October, the security situation in that area has direct consequences for the broader Black Sea region.

That brings me to my second point. Let us focus on the root cause of the situation we are discussing today — the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation. That remains a violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The annexation constitutes an ongoing threat to international peace and security that merits the full attention of the Council. Since 2014, the security situation in the region has been worsening due to the actions that the Russian Federation has taken. It has militarized the Crimean peninsula, illegally built a bridge over the Kerch Strait and imposed unilateral and unwarranted limitations on maritime shipping in the Sea of Azov.

Thirdly, any further escalation of tensions must be prevented. We call on the Russian Federation to halt all restrictions on the freedom of navigation that it has imposed both within and into the Sea of Azov, and refrain from any further military confrontation with Ukrainian vessels in the region. Such actions are illegal and violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We furthermore reiterate the various calls from the international community, including from the European Union, on all parties involved to exercise the utmost restraint in order to prevent any further escalation of tensions. The stakes are high, and the consequences could be grave.

As the Kingdom of the Netherlands said in its statement on 30 October, it welcomes Ukraine's decision to seek arbitration under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We urge the Russian Federation and Ukraine to commit to that arbitration process and seek a peaceful legal settlement to the dispute.

Let me end by reiterating that sustainable peace and stability in the region will be possible only if and when the Russian Federation returns to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

First of all, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

China has noted the altercations between Russian and Ukrainian naval ships in the waters near the Kerch Strait. We are concerned over the tensions arising therefrom. China calls for the relevant parties to exercise restraint, and hopes that they will, in order to prevent any further escalation of tension and properly resolve the relevant issues through dialogue and concertation. China has consistently maintained its objectivity and impartiality with regard to the crisis in Ukraine. China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine, and opposes interference in Ukraine's internal affairs by any external forces. We are always of the view that military solutions will get nowhere. The only way to resolve crises is through dialogue and negotiations.

The international community must stay the course with its diplomatic efforts to push for a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. Discussions in the Council should contribute to achieving a genuine easing of tensions in the affected regions of Ukraine and play

a constructive role in facilitating a political solution. China believes that all the relevant parties should earnestly implement the new Minsk agreements and stay the course of political settlement through dialogue and concertation in seeking a comprehensive solution to the Ukrainian issue. That will enable Ukraine to achieve peace, stability and development, enabling all ethnic groups to live in peace within Ukraine, and Ukraine to live in peace with all the countries of the region. China is ready to continue playing its positive role in the political settlement of the crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Before coming here, I did what some of us normally do every morning. I searched on the Internet to find out what happened on this day in history. Here is what I found.

Exactly on this day, 26 November, in 1939, the Soviet army orchestrated an incident by shelling the village of Mainula, near the Soviet-Finnish border. Then the Soviets claimed that the shelling had come from the Finnish side and used that as a pretext for their invasion of Finland on 30 November. That is how the so-called Winter War started, which eventually led to the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the League of Nations. That is interesting, is it not? That is a story about a failure to learn lessons.

(*spoke in Russian*)

Mr. Polyanskiy was the one to talk about who had learned lessons and who had not.

(*spoke in English*)

We appreciate the convening of this briefing at the request of Ukraine. I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Security Council for the unwavering support for my country that they have demonstrated once again today. And, of course, I thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo for her very useful update.

We are convinced that it is of the utmost importance to discuss the recent developments near the Kerch Strait, since they constitute a clear threat to international peace and security. Before delving into the subject, I would like first to express my dismay at the attempt of the Russian Federation to manipulate the agenda of the Council and to have a meeting convened under an agenda item with the deceiving title "Violation of the borders of the Russian Federation". In that regard, I have to emphasize that, according to the international law, Crimea and its respective territorial waters are Ukrainian territory, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. Therefore, there are no Russian borders in the area where the incident happened. I repeat — there are no Russian State borders around the Crimean peninsula.

The Council has already heard the Russian interpretation of the events, which, as usual, has been concocted to mix reality with fiction, in the ultimate goal of misinforming, misleading and confusing the listener. Instead of real details about yesterday's incident, we heard epic stories about an apocalypse in Ukraine. The Russian claim regarding a violation of the Russian border by Ukrainian naval ships is an outright lie that was invented just to cynically shift all the responsibility onto the Ukrainian side, consciously manipulating the facts and ignoring the evidence. In order for all Council members to better understand the situation, I would like to present the main facts of what happened during the past three days.

First of all, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and article 2 of the treaty between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on cooperation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, the Ukrainian navy enjoys full freedom of navigation in the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov and, therefore, can pass through the Kerch Strait at any time.

On 23 November, a Ukrainian Navy boat group, which included the small armoured boats *Nikopol* and *Berdyansk* and the tugboat *Yani Kapu*, began a planned transit from the Black Sea port of Odessa to the port of Mariupol in the Sea of Azov. The route and procedure of that passage were the same as in September, when the two Ukrainian naval vessels *Donetsk* and *Korets* sailed from Odessa to Mariupol. On 24 November, during the naval movement, the commander of the Ukrainian naval group received a notice from the Russian authorities concerning the closure of navigation in the Kerch Strait area. However, the international centre for navigation control located in Spain did not confirm that notification.

On 25 November, the Ukrainian commander twice requested passage through Kerch Strait from the Russian maritime control services. He did not receive an answer. Later the Russian maritime control officer

directed the Ukrainian navy boat group to the so-called area of waiting. It was stated that Ukrainian vessels would soon be informed on the Kerch Strait passage procedure. And then all hell broke loose.

At approximately 8.30 or 9 a.m., a Russian coast guard ship rammed the tugboat *Yani Kapu* and damaged it. The video of that attack is available online. A viewing will clearly show that the Ukrainian boat was trying to avoid the collision, while the Russian ship was deliberately carrying out the attack. I also have to warn viewers that if they happen to understand the Russian language, they will hear lots of profanities from the Russian sailors in that short video clip.

After the ramming, the Russian vessels blocked the other two Ukrainian vessels from rendering assistance to the damaged vessel. All the while, the Russian vessels were trying to provoke Ukrainian seamen to open fire. At 1.22 p.m., two Russian Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopters approached the Ukrainian cutters at their anchorage spot at a height of 50 metres. They openly demonstrated their missile armaments and their laser-aiming device. After completing the dangerous manoeuvres, the helicopters departed towards the Crimean peninsula.

From 1.40 p.m. onwards, Russia physically blocked the passage beneath the so-called Kerch Bridge with the placement of first a tanker and then a cargo ship. After 7 p.m., due to the impossibility of passing through the Strait, the Ukrainian navy ships headed back to exit the Kerch Strait, turning away from the Strait and towards the open sea. They were immediately followed by a group of about 10 coast guard and Russian Black Sea fleet vessels.

There are audio recordings of communications among the Russian vessel commanders regarding orders on how to proceed. Those recordings clearly demonstrate that the Russian military vessels were given orders to attack the Ukrainian vessels after the latter started to withdraw from the area.

At approximately 8.30 p.m., the Russian side carried out the shoot-to-kill order. I have all of those recordings on my telephone, but I will not waste the Council's time now in playing them. Instead, I will limit myself to quoting a couple of exchanges that were intercepted.

There is a conversation between the base in Kerch and the Russian boat *Izumrud*:

> "Hands up, hands up, everyone on board, hands up. Throw down your arms. We will shoot to kill."

And then, finally, on who ordered the shooting, there is a communication from *Izumrud*.

> "I cannot connect with *Izumrud*, there is commotion in the air. They are shouting 'the Ukrainians are sinking' and what is going on with them I don't understand."

And then, the commander from Kerch asks, "Who gave the order to shoot to kill?"

And the captain of *Izumrud* replies: "It was me. According to your previous orders."

The Ukrainian vessels *Berdyansk* and *Nikopol* were damaged. After that, Ukrainian vessels were forced to stop and were seized by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) special forces. Six Ukrainian seamen are wounded, three seriously so and, according to information we have received, one is in critical condition.

The video footage of ramming and shooting, as well as relevant audio recordings, have already been posted online and everybody can consult them to see what happened and how it happened.

Throughout all those events, the Ukrainian side acted strictly in line with international law and the existing bilateral agreement with the Russian Federation. Ukraine's right to cross the Kerch-Yenikale canal is guaranteed by paragraph 1 of article 2 of the 2003 treaty between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on cooperation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. The treaty clearly provides for freedom of navigation for both civil and military vessels of Ukraine and Russia in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. This is the treaty in my hands, which was signed by the current Russian Government.

(*spoke in Russian*)

Mr. Polyanskiy cannot deny that this agreement has been signed by his side and needs to be upheld.

(*spoke in English*)

Secondly, the Russian Federation was duly informed well in advance through traditional channels of communication about the passing of the Ukrainian navy's group through the Kerch Strait.

Thirdly, the Ukrainian Navy group strictly followed the orders of the traffic control service. As the Council can see, there were no provocations whatsoever from Ukraine's part. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation opted to purposefully block the passage of the Ukrainian ships, thus violating the freedom of navigation guaranteed by the Ukraine-Russia cooperation agreement on the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait.

Moreover, Russia committed an act of open military aggression against Ukraine by targeting, firing on and capturing three military vessels. I would like to remind everyone that, pursuant to article 3 (d) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX),

> "an attack by the armed forces of a State on the land, sea or air forces, or marine and air fleets of another State"

qualifies as an act of aggression.

Russia's recent belligerent acts constitute yet another violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, as well as existing bilateral agreements. This is a conscious provocation aimed at aggravating the security situation in the region with a view to Russia establishing full control over the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. There is irrefutable evidence that the recent aggressive actions by Russia were planned and authorized by top Russian military leadership.

Ukraine's restraint in its response clearly demonstrates that we are committed to solving the current situation by peaceful means and in full compliance with international law and existing bilateral obligations. Nevertheless, further escalation of the situation by the Russian Federation should not be ruled out. According to available intelligence, there is a clear threat of invasion of Mariupol and the seizing of Berdyansk. Further aggressive acts and provocations by the FSB Border Guard Service and the Russian navy remain a realistic possibility.

Due to those threats, yesterday the President of Ukraine supported the initiative of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine to propose to the Parliament of Ukraine to declare martial law for 60 days, but to cut it short to 30 days in order to avoid unnecessary speculation. The imposed martial law can be lifted at any time. It will have no negative effects on respect for human rights and the functioning of democratic institutions. In response to the Russian delegation's scare stories about the alleged motives of Ukraine's President regarding the declaration of martial law, I will simply quote the statement that the President made just a couple of minutes ago, which is available online:

> "The martial law will last 30 days and will be over in the middle of December. In Early December, I will submit a draft decision of the Parliament regarding the date of the presidential elections, which, according to the Constitution, are to be held on 31 March 2019."

Ukraine is ready to settle the situation in through political and diplomatic means. At the same time, we are ready to use all available means in exercising our right to self-defence, as provided for in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Kremlin's criminal regime has once again demonstrated that it will not end its aggressive policies and is ready to commit any acts of aggression against the Ukrainian State. The dramatic escalation of the situation in the region demands a rapid response from the international community. These events are yet another testament to the relevance of the General Assembly draft resolution prepared by Ukraine and a group of like-minded States regarding the issue of the militarization of Crimea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Once again, we are grateful for today's strong statements in support of Ukraine, calling on the Russian Federation to guarantee freedom of navigation in the region and condemning Russia's acts of aggression in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Ukraine demands that Russia immediately release the 23 captured Ukrainian servicemen and all three Ukrainian ships. We also call on the international community to implement a new set of sanctions aimed at addressing the situation in the region, including against Russia's ports on the Sea of Azov. The increased political pressure on Moscow would help to de-escalate the security situation at sea and lift the block on the free crossing of the Kerch-Yenikale canal. If unopposed, the Kremlin regime will continue to commit other aggressive acts, creating ever more widespread conflict in the region.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Many interesting things have been said, and I have decided to share our views on them after all, although of course a lot of them are not worth discussing and a lot are very predictable. First of all, we once again feel we were absolutely justified in our proposal to hold a meeting under a different agenda item, since people seem to be talking about anything they feel like — annexation, occupation, aggression. I was astonished to learn that we have occupied and even annexed the Sea of Azov. That is news to us. But as far as the main theme is concerned, nobody really said much. Except Ambassador Yelchenko, who did indeed torture the facts. But I will return to that later.

The only question is why the Ukrainians, who had been familiar with the regime for passage through the Kerch Strait and using it without any problems, suddenly carried out an act of clear provocation and risked the lives of their own sailors. Nobody has tried to answer that question or even mention it. It could therefore be perceived by as giving Ukraine carte blanche to continue such provocations and foment a situation that could pose a threat to everyone in the region. And going on what Mr. Yelchenko said, Ukraine got the message.

I would like to correct some errors on the part of some of the speakers. Ms. DiCarlo somehow confused Crimea and the Minsk agreements in a very odd way. I hope that she has actually read the Minsk agreements. She is no doubt well aware that there is not a word in them about Crimea. She also urged respect for the sovereignty of Ukraine, but only Ukraine. Surely, though, the Russian Federation's sovereignty should be respected as well. At least we assume that is what she believes. Mrs. Haley also assumed that Crimea is part of the Minsk agreements, and I got the impression, at least I thought I heard, that the Minsk agreements apparently extend even to the Sea of Azov too. I am sorry to say that such ignorance is shocking. We devoted most of a previous meeting (see S/PV.8270), to an analysis of the Minsk agreements by Mr. Nebenzia, our Permanent Representative, who went through them from the first to the last paragraph. And in spite of that we have to listen to this egregious stuff.

With regard to the incident itself there are many questions. An investigation is under way, of course, and we will certainly share its conclusions. I do not want to anticipate anything about what is still a hot topic, but I can speak to two points that have not been mentioned but that are clearly significant and relevant to analysis of the incident. First, on board one of the vessels were two employees of Ukraine's security services who admitted that they were on a special assignment and were supposed to act in exactly that way. We will tell the Council about that too.

In another small but relatively important detail, the Ukrainians violated our border in a place that was Russian territory before 2014, if we decided to talk about what is Crimea and what is not. But the Ukrainians refused a pilot and made a treacherous approach to the Kerch Strait from the south. That is an act of gross provocation and it is hard even to imagine any other way of putting it, and yet some of those here have knowingly covered it up. It is also worth pointing out that their actions, including in supporting Ukraine's version of what happened, are already exacerbating the situation, including in eastern Ukraine. As our colleagues from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have told us, the Ukrainian military has been drawing up Buk S-300 surface-to-air missile systems and Grad and Uragan multiple rocket launchers at the line of contact. The disengagement of forces in Stanytsia Luhanska is blocked and soldiers have infiltrated disengagement areas in Zolote and Petrovske. Units of the Ukrainian seventy-second brigade have captured the village of Rozsadky near Svitlodarsk. Those are real things that testify to the fact that the Minsk agreements are being violated. Everything else, and in any case a lot of what has been said here today, has absolutely nothing to do with that, and those facts have been completely ignored by the speakers here today.

Although Crimea is not on the Security Council's agenda, as long as the subject has been brought up, I would also like to say that whether anyone likes it or not, the question of where Crimea belongs has long ago been closed for both us and for Crimeans. No sanctions or restrictions will change our decision. That issue was closed after the Crimeans voted to reunite with Russia in a free referendum based on a nation's right to self-determination. Many people ask if we knew then what awaited us in the frenzied rush of the West to launch its anti-Russian geopolitical "project Ukraine" that I mentioned earlier this morning. Of course we knew. We had no illusions. Does Russia regret what has happened? Absolutely not. Furthermore, I want to say that an overwhelming majority of Russians are proud of it, since if we had not taken a stand to protect the Crimeans, today they would be dying from

the Ukrainian army's bullets and shells, just as the Russian-speaking residents of Donbas are dying. They are dying merely because they want to speak Russian, teach their children in Russian and honour those who liberated Ukraine from the fascists rather than those who collaborated with them.

While I did not mention it in my previous statement on the correct topic for this meeting, I should also point out that Kyiv's decisions have given free rein to Ukraine's radical nationalists. They have been particularly active in the past few days. And in particular, nobody has mentioned the fact that there was another attack on the Russian Embassy in Kyiv while the police did nothing. A diplomatic car was set on fire last night. The radicals continue to threaten to storm our diplomatic headquarters. As I understand it, we should expect no response on this from anyone. Does anyone think that is normal? We demand that Ukraine provide full and unconditional immunity to Russia's embassies and general consulates in Ukraine, in accordance with the norms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, and that it hold those responsible for the attacks accountable.

Since you represent China, Mr. President, I would like to remind you of a well-known saying of Confucius about the fact that it is very difficult to find a black cat in a dark room, especially when it is not there. That is exactly what the members here are doing, discussing an imaginary act of aggression by Russia without talking about the real reason for having this meeting today. But the problem is right under their noses and can be solved extremely easily, as I have already said. An order from Washington could resolve it in the space of 10 minutes. Unfortunately, judging by our Ukrainian colleague's statement, I have to conclude that they have been considerably cheered and intend to continue in their chosen provocative spirit, and hence the fantasies we have been hearing about our plans to seize Mariupol.

In conclusion, I want to issue a warning that Kyiv's policy of provoking a conflict with Russia conducted in coordination with the United States and the European Union is fraught with exceedingly serious consequences. We will put a firm stop to any infringement on the sovereignty and security of the Russian Federation, including in the waters of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. I hope that is clear to everyone.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, who has asked to make a further statement.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I will be very brief, because I think I was clear enough in my previous statement, which needs no further explanation.

I just want to say that since the spring of 2014, we have heard a lot of epic Russian stories saying that "Crimea is ours" and "They are not there", meaning Russians in Donbas. I think everyone, at least in this Chamber, is completely fed up with all those stories.

My brief comment is specifically for the benefit of Mr. Polyanskiy. The Kerch Strait can only be approached from the south, because the Sea of Azov is located north of the Black Sea. When he said that the Ukrainian ships were brazenly moving northward in trying to enter the Kerch Strait, I could not understand what he meant. They were attacked by the Russian Navy while moving from the Kerch-Yenikale canal southward.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8411

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8411th meeting
Thursday, 29 November 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Ms. Samson
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018) (S/2018/1041)

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18-40524 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018) (S/2018/1041)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Reena Ghelani, Director of Operations and Advocacy of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/1041, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018).

I now give the floor to Ms. Ghelani.

Ms. Ghelani: I provide this update today on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Mark Lowcock.

I would like to start with the situation in north-western Syria, where there have been reports of mortars — including some shells reportedly containing chlorine gas — hitting three densely populated neighbourhoods in western Aleppo city: Nile Street, Al-Khalidiyah and Al-Zahraa. People with respiratory symptoms were rushed to the two main hospitals in the area. The World Health Organization has provided support to both hospitals and stands ready to provide further public health support, as required. As the Secretary-General has repeatedly stressed, any confirmed use of chemical weapons is abhorrent and a clear violation of international law.

We have also received reports of air strikes in Idlib governorate on 24 and 25 November — the first such air strikes in more than two months. Those latest developments demonstrate the fragility of the situation and the urgent need for the sustained engagement of all sides to preserve the gains of the agreement that was reached between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation on 17 September. The stakes remain high, as the alternative is humanitarian suffering on a scale that would devastate a population of some 3 million people in north-western Syria, who have known nothing but war and suffering in recent years.

In Rukban, between 3 and 8 November, the United Nations, together with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, was finally able to reach some 50,000 people — three-quarters of them women and children. That aid operation, approved by the Government of Syria and facilitated by the Russian Federation and the United States, was the first major delivery of material assistance to the people of Rukban since January, and the first time that aid has been delivered from within Syria. Our teams also vaccinated more than 5,000 children, together with officials from the Syrian Ministry of Health.

Colleagues returned shocked by what they had seen on the ground, reporting grave protection issues, increasing food insecurity and no certified medical doctors among the stranded population. Given the gravity of the situation, the Secretary-General has called for the deployment of a further convoy to the area as a matter of priority. Without sustained access, the situation of tens of thousands of Syrians, stranded in the harshest desert conditions, will only further deteriorate as the winter cold sets in.

Most people inside the makeshift settlement have stated a desire to return to their homes, but many are terrified of what the future may hold for them, whether it is in Government areas or locations held by non-State armed groups. A durable solution that is safe, voluntary and dignified — one that adequately addresses protection concerns — is urgently needed for the population in Rukban.

We are seriously concerned about the increasing number of reports of civilian casualties due to air strikes and ground fighting in south-eastern Deir ez-Zor governorate. Many civilians are reported among the dead and injured. Some 6,000 have been displaced from the Hajin enclave, controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, since October, with an estimated 10,000 people remaining within the enclave. Most are unable to access assistance and face severe protection risks. Of those who have been displaced, many live in

dire conditions in makeshift settlements, with some dangerously close to the front lines.

Despite considerable challenges in accessing areas of displacement due to insecurity and geographic isolation, local United Nations humanitarian partners have continued to provide assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Gharanij and Bahrah areas. That includes multisectoral assistance provided to 6,000 IDPs. We reiterate that under international law, the parties to the conflict must protect civilians against attacks, treat them humanely and allow and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief.

We are also deeply troubled by reports of restrictions in north-eastern Syria, where half of the some 100,000 children enrolled in Government-run schools are facing impediments to accessing their schools, especially in Qamishli and Al-Hasakah cities. An estimated 10,000 children have not been able to attend school at all since late September. Vehicles, including school buses and private cars, have been prevented from crossing checkpoints if they are carrying children going to schools that teach the nationally accredited curriculum.

Over the past weeks, the United Nations has been engaged in efforts with all concerned parties to advocate for children to be able to go safely to a school of their choosing. Across Syria, the conflict continues to have a devastating impact on children, including their access to education. An estimated 180,000 teachers are no longer in service. Some 40 per cent of schools have been damaged or destroyed, and many others have been used to shelter displaced people. All Syrian children have a right to education without discrimination, and that right must be protected, respected and fulfilled.

Despite the very difficult conditions, the United Nations and its partners are committed to reaching all those in need, wherever they are. Over the past year, an average of almost 5.4 million people have been reached with humanitarian assistance each month through all possible avenues — from within Syria to areas under Government control, from within Syria across conflict lines, and from across the borders.

Cross-border aid remains a critical part of the United Nations response in Syria. This month alone, nearly 600,000 people in Syria have received United Nations food assistance delivered across the border with Turkey through the crossings at Bab Al-Salam and Bab Al-Hawa. Cross-border deliveries also included medicines, educational supplies and other non-food items for hundreds of thousands of people. Humanitarian organizations have just completed the vaccination of more than 12,500 children, aged between six months and 15 years, against measles and rubella in Idlib governorate, using supplies that had been delivered across the border. Thousands more benefited from education supplies and services, school rehabilitation and textbooks.

United Nations cross-border assistance is checked and verified by the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic at designated border-crossing points. Every truck is checked to ensure that it contains only humanitarian supplies. Deliveries are confirmed by United Nations-contracted third-party monitors upon arrival at warehouses inside Syria, where they check the items being offloaded against the waybill. Then there is post-distribution monitoring again, including by independent third parties and through feedback received from affected communities. United Nations cross-border assistance is also subject to the normal accountability mechanisms between the donors and the delivery agencies, which also includes another verification system.

Currently, some 4.3 million people in need live in areas outside the control of the Government. That accounts for more than one-third of all people in need of assistance in Syria. It includes almost 3 million people in need in areas reached exclusively through cross-border operations. The United Nations does not have an alternative means of reaching those people, as access from within the country is impeded. It is for that reason that the Secretary-General has called for a renewal of resolution 2165 (2014) for an additional 12 months. The renewal of the resolution will continue to save lives. Millions of people depend on the Council's decision.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Ghelani for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Reena Ghelani, Director of Operations and Advocacy Division in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for her valuable briefing, which confirms the continuation of the dire humanitarian situation in Syria. I would also like to pay tribute to all humanitarian and medical workers for their efforts in the field to alleviate the human suffering in Syria.

I deliver this statement on behalf of the co-penholders of the Syrian humanitarian file, Sweden and Kuwait. I will focus on two points: the overall humanitarian situation in Syria and access to humanitarian aid.

With regard to the overall humanitarian situation, the Syrian crisis is entering its eighth winter. We must take a moment to review the humanitarian situation on the ground. The statistics of the United Nations confirm that the humanitarian situation in Syria continues to deteriorate. There are 13 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, of whom more than 5 million are children. There are more than 5.6 million registered refugees in neighbouring countries, including 2.5 million children. More than 1 million people live in hard-to-reach areas. Behind those alarming numbers are countless stories of human suffering of Syrian civilians — children, women and elderly persons — who have become victim to one of the worst conflicts of our time.

The past few days and weeks witnessed a military escalation following a period of relative calm as a result of the Russian-Turkish agreement on Idlib. We reiterate our call on the Astana guarantors to ensure that the ceasefire in Idlib holds. The increase in military actions and hostilities — as we have seen in Aleppo, Hamah, Idlib and Deir ez-Zor — and reports of the use of chemicals again, this time in Aleppo, remind all of us of the fragility of the situation in Syria.

We renew our condemnation of the use of chemical weapons, anywhere, at any time and by any party as it constitutes a violation of international law and relevant conventions. The use of chemical weapons in armed conflict constitutes a war crime, and we stress that those responsible for such crimes, whether they be individuals, entities, non-State actors or Governments, must be held accountable.

We also reaffirm that all parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure respect for it in all circumstances, including by protecting civilians and civilian targets. This year there have been over 130 attacks on hospitals and health-care facilities in Syria. We strongly condemn attacks against hospitals, as well as attacks targeting vital civilian facilities. We also call on all parties to respect international human rights law. There must be accountability for those who have committed serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law.

We are concerned by the continued danger of explosives, mines and improvised explosive devices in a number of areas in Syria, which poses a threat to civilians and hinders the work of humanitarian actors.

With regard to access to humanitarian aid, there are still significant challenges for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Syria, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1041). While we welcome the delivery of aid several weeks ago to Rukban Camp and the 50,000 people living there, after nearly 10 months since the last delivery, we stress the need for sustained and unhindered humanitarian access all across Syria, using all existing modalities, including cross-border, cross-line and humanitarian programmes. When it comes to the latter, we regret that no inter-agency humanitarian convoys were deployed in October and that the bimonthly inter-agency convoy plan for September and October was not approved by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. We still see a situation where more than 1 million people face a denial of access to humanitarian assistance, which should be provided based on human principles and needs.

Cross-border humanitarian assistance remains an indispensable lifeline to millions of people throughout Syria. It is a vital, important and complementary part of the humanitarian response in the country. The United Nations monitoring mechanism that monitors international humanitarian activities is robust and continuously strengthened.

We share the Secretary-General's assessment in his monthly report on the importance of the renewal of the provisions set out in resolution 2165 (2014) and subsequent resolutions. They support the provision of assistance to those in need through the most direct routes — including across borders — especially as the United Nations does not have an alternative means of reaching people in need in those areas.

For the reasons I have mentioned here, and because the reality on the ground confirms that the humanitarian situation in Syria continues to be dire, Sweden and Kuwait, as co-penholders, intend to work to renew the resolution on humanitarian access, including the cross-border assistance modality. We will circulate the draft resolution soon and look forward to having the cooperation of all Council members in that regard. There is a critical humanitarian need for a renewal of the provisions of resolution 2165 (2014),

which represents the difference between life and death for many people in Syria. The Council must not fail those Syrians in need.

We stress the importance of ensuring a lasting ceasefire in Idlib, and indeed throughout Syria, in order to enable access for humanitarian assistance and for evacuating the injured, in accordance with international law and as stipulated in resolution 2401 (2018). We welcome the fact that many people who had been detained by Government or opposition forces were released on 24 November. That is an important first step towards building confidence between the parties to the conflict.

Lastly, without a political solution to the conflict in Syria in line with the provisions of resolution 2254 (2015), the humanitarian situation there will continue to deteriorate. As the last month of the year is almost upon us, we emphasize that every effort must be made to reinvigorate the political process, including the establishment of a constitutional committee before the end of the year.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Ms. Ghelani for her briefing and for the important work that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is doing to support the Syrian people.

We are grateful to the United Nations and the brave workers on the ground who delivered critical humanitarian aid on 3 November that included much-needed vaccinations for 5,193 children and also provided life-saving assistance to more than 50,000 internally displaced persons, most of them women and children. The United States worked for months with the United Nations and like-minded allies and partners to secure a Russian agreement to support the United Nations-Syrian Arab Red Crescent humanitarian assistance delivery. We also worked together to extract the necessary approvals from the Syrian regime to allow the United Nations to make its first humanitarian assistance delivery to the Rukban camp since January, and the first ever from Damascus.

The humanitarian needs in Rukban remain immediate and severe. A one-time aid delivery to Rukban is a good start, but it is certainly not enough. It is essential to provide United Nations humanitarian workers with sustained access to the camp. The United States has shown that it will do everything possible to facilitate aid to areas in Syria where we have influence, and we remain ready to provide security for any future deliveries of humanitarian aid through areas under the control of the global coalition to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. The Rukban aid delivery is clear evidence that Russia and the United States can work together to help the people of Syria and that the Russian Federation can secure the regime's approval for humanitarian deliveries. There is no conceivable reason for the Syrian regime to block future deliveries. We are willing to work with Russia to keep the arrangement going and we hope that the Russian authorities can work with Damascus to facilitate more of those deliveries in the future. We fully support the current United Nations plan to make another delivery to Rukban in mid-December, and we call on Russia and the Syrian regime to do their part to ensure that that happens without delay.

We must all continue to push for full, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access throughout Syria for the millions of people in need, including greater access for those in eastern Ghouta and south-western Syria. We urge Russia and Damascus to step up and get humanitarian aid to all the 13 million Syrians who need it. The Syrian regime has the opportunity to demonstrate its willingness and ability to facilitate aid deliveries throughout the territories it controls. But humanitarian access has not improved in communities that are firmly backed by the regime and under its control, in places such as eastern Ghouta, just outside Damascus. Why? Because the regime seeks to punish communities that are outside or were formerly outside its control for what they believe is a lack of loyalty to Al-Assad. That is wrong-headed.

An unwillingness to approve facilitation letters and other bureaucratic delays is essentially a denial of access, and it continues. As access to people in need across Syria continues to be severely constrained, the United Nations and its partners are providing life-saving aid to some 750,000 people every month through cross-border operations. There is currently no credible alternative for reaching those people. It is therefore absolutely imperative that the Council support the reauthorization of the cross-border humanitarian aid delivery mechanism provided for in resolution 2165 (2014). The United States strongly supports its renewal for an additional 12 months, as the Secretary-General has called for. We look forward to working with our colleagues on the Council to ensure that it is renewed.

Humanitarian conditions in Syria will continue to be dire in the absence of a credible United Nations-led process. The formation of a constitutional committee must move forward as quickly as possible. Despite the relative calm afforded to the people of Idlib in the past two months since the ceasefire agreement was reached between Turkey and Russia, Idlib's 3 million residents live in daily uncertainty. What is certain, however, is that any military escalation would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences for millions of civilians and for the stability and security of Syria's neighbours. We need only look at the events of the past weekend in Aleppo, where there are reports from the Syrian regime of an alleged chemical attack and Russian air strikes inside the Turkish-Russian demilitarized zone. We can all see how fragile the situation is and that millions of Syrian lives are at stake.

Russia committed to a lasting ceasefire in Idlib in the Istanbul summit communiqué of 27 October. To date, that ceasefire has resulted in very substantial reductions in violence. It is absolutely essential to ensure that the Syrian regime does not seize on false pretexts to undermine the ceasefire and launch a military offensive in Idlib, which would not only lead to a resumption of violence but would seriously jeopardize the prospects for a political solution to the conflict. We continue to engage with the Russian Government and military at senior levels to make it clear that an offensive in Idlib would represent a reckless escalation of the conflict and would put millions of civilians in danger.

The instability for many civilians in Idlib is palpable. Just last week, two of Syria's most prominent peaceful resistance activists, Mr. Raed Fares and Mr. Hamoud Jneed, were assassinated there. I would like to express our condolences to the families and friends of Mr. Fares and Mr. Jneed on behalf of my Government. Their selfless dedication to amplifying the voices of the Syrian people and their desire for peace, justice and dignity were sources of inspiration for so many. The Syrian people have been silenced for too long, and the prospect of a constitutional committee represents an important opportunity to move the political process forward in order to finally end the conflict. We ask the Syrian regime to take this opportunity and to make the move towards peace and stability in its country and region.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Ms. Ghelani for her briefing.

As the Council is aware, the capital of Kazakhstan just hosted the eleventh international meeting in the framework of the Astana process, in which the issues of progress on a political settlement based on the groundwork laid in Geneva and Sochi, further improvements in the situation on the ground and the development of confidence-building measures among the Syrian parties were discussed. We thank our partners in Kazakhstan for their unwavering hospitality. As a result of the meeting, a joint statement was agreed on in which, having emphasized their determination to strengthen their trilateral cooperation, the guarantor countries among other things repudiated all attempts to create new realities on the ground on the pretext of combating terrorism, and expressed their determination to counter any separatist plans designed to undermine Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity or the national security of its neighbours.

Iran, Russia and Turkey welcomed the success on 24 November of the pilot project to exchange people who had been forcibly detained, which was a step forward in the work of building trust among the Syrian stakeholders.

On the whole, the situation in much of Syria is stable. While problems remain, there is clear evidence that things on the humanitarian front are improving, which is particularly noticeable in the areas controlled by Damascus. It is perhaps premature to take stock of outcomes for the year, but we believe that it is a major achievement that the so-called besieged areas have completely dropped off our agenda, for instance. However, the growing number of violations of the cessation of hostilities regime in the Idlib de-escalation zone is worrying. There was a particularly alarming incident last week when militants based inside the zone fired shells containing toxic substances on resident neighbourhoods in Aleppo, as has already been mentioned today. There are casualties. We hope that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will undertake the necessary measures in connection with the reports from Damascus as soon as possible. Prior to that, there was an attack in the area of Jurin by militants from Haras Al-Din, an illegal armed group affiliated with Al-Qaida, in the repelling of which 18 soldiers were killed.

The Astana guarantor countries will ramp up their efforts to ensure that the cessation of hostilities is maintained and affirm their willingness to fully implement the 17 September memorandum on the

stabilization of the situation in Idlib. But it is important to understand that however significant a sustainable ceasefire is, it does not eliminate the need to continue working effectively to combat terrorism. The flow of refugees and internally displaced persons returning to their homes is gaining strength, with an average of up to 1,000 people returning from Lebanon and Jordan every day. To the extent that they can, the Syrian authorities are making significant efforts to create favourable conditions for their citizens. Helpful adjustments are being made at the legislative level.

As we have repeatedly stressed, at this critical juncture it falls to the international community to collectively get behind the Syrian people in order to repair the devastation as soon as possible and establish normal life for those who have voluntarily decided to return to their homeland. The guarantor countries of the Astana process have urged the international community, especially the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies, to increase assistance to Syria, including by expanding humanitarian deliveries and rebuilding civilian infrastructure. Meanwhile, however, we are obliged to assume that some Western capitals have not grasped this and have made assistance in the restoration conditional on political circumstances, which is an inhumane approach. Sometimes they are also intimidating others who might dare to circumvent illegal unilateral sanctions, for example, and that is also unacceptable.

Following the eradication of the terrorist presence in the southern suburbs of Damascus, the Syrian authorities have been developing a plan to restore the Palestinian refugee camp in Yarmouk, and the streets there are currently being cleared. We assume that the foreign donors who are traditionally sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians might participate in implementing those plans.

The situation in the health-care sector remains very serious. According to the response plan for Syria in 2019 prepared by the World Health Organization (WHO) country office, humanitarian medical assistance is still needed, especially in newly liberated areas. More than half of the country's medical facilities are closed or functioning only partially. There is an acute shortage of medicines for treating common diseases, owing to disruptions in the supply chain. A third of the population is using water from unreliable sources. Over the past year all of these factors have led to outbreaks of measles, leishmaniasis and diarrhoea. It is important for WHO to focus on restoring the local authorities' capacity to provide medical care. We continue to highlight the inadmissibility of maintaining unilateral sanctions against Syria, which significantly limit the ability of the authorities to obtain medicines and medical equipment.

Unfortunately, many questions remain about the activities of the so-called coalition led by the United States, which is present on Syrian soil in violation of the basic principles of international law. We are deeply concerned about the continued build-up of the United States military presence on the left bank of the Euphrates. According to the media, the total number of United States military bases in Syria has already reached 19. The speed of its occupation and consolidation of quasi-State structures on the ground is growing, complicating the prospects for a political settlement.

The military operation in the area of Hajin in Deir ez-Zor governorate, which was announced as being against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), has done no significant damage to the terrorists. Instead, as we have heard, including from Ms. Ghelani, time and time again its victims are civilians, and that is ever more difficult to deny. The Syrians have been sending desperate letters to the Security Council but for some reason they seem to resonate very little with the international community, just as we have seen no reaction to the discovery of mass graves of victims of the coalition's air strikes in Raqqa. Incidentally, the discrepancies in the statistics jump out at one. The Secretary-General's report (S/2018/1041) speaks of 1,000 bodies exhumed, while according to the letter from Syria to the members of the Security Council the figure is four times larger. According to some reports, the United States refuses to consider the possibility of paying compensation for those killed in Raqqa. Against that backdrop, we are genuinely shocked by the details that have time and time again come to light of some Western capitals' support for Syrian opposition armed groups, including the transfer of arms and other material means to terrorists, while the public has been kept in the dark or deliberately misled.

In our view, those with influence over the armed groups controlling certain areas in north-eastern Syria should convince their clients to address the situation in which schoolchildren are not being given access to educational institutions in Government-held areas, which we also heard about in Ms. Ghelani's briefing and which can only be described as barbaric. In Damascus,

by the way, they are doing everything possible to ensure uninterrupted schooling throughout Syria.

In general, it should be acknowledged that the self-proclaimed local councils, which have the support of external allies, have from time to time been implementing discriminatory policies in the country's north-eastern areas that are changing the historical composition of the population.

The situation in the Rukban camp remains very unfortunate. The humanitarian operation launched at the beginning of November was inadequate from an organizational standpoint. United Nations and Syrian Arab Red Crescent personnel were not allowed inside the 55-kilometre zone occupied by the United States around the Al-Tanf base. Militants from the Maghawir Al-Thawra armed group organized the distribution of aid. Without the necessary oversight, a significant portion of the humanitarian assistance failed to reach those who needed it. Many could not get inoculated because the vaccinations were being administered at a distance from the camp. Considering such gross errors, it would be difficult to expect that the Syrian Government, which has no authority in the area of the camp, to give instant permission for a new humanitarian convoy to come in. It is the United States, which is fully responsible for the plight of the civilians in the area, that should ensure the security of humanitarian operations in Rukban, not shift the fulfilment of the job onto illegal armed groups.

It is important to ensure that United Nations humanitarian personnel are involved in the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid, with the assistance of reputable organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. We urge that the possibility of organizing a permanent humanitarian corridor to Rukban be considered. The bigger picture should focus on gradually dismantling the camp and resettling its residents. We are ready to continue consultations with the United Nations, the Government of Syria and our United States and Jordanian colleagues. However, the only real way to solve the problem is by ending the occupation around the Al-Tanf base, not through one-off humanitarian initiatives. Incidentally, one of the ISIL terrorists taken hostage during a special operation to liberate Druze prisoners on the Al-Safa plateau in eastern Suwayda testified that he and his accomplices had received weapons, munitions and food from the area around the Al-Tanf base. It would be a good idea to properly investigate what exactly is going on in that grey area.

One extremely worrying fact is this year's record low wheat harvest in Syria, the worst in 30 years, which is partly due to drought. In that regard, the United Nations specialized agencies should help to support the country's food security, including by re-establishing its stores of vital cereal grains.

There is continuing major uncertainty with regard to cross-border deliveries of humanitarian assistance to Syria under the interim mechanism introduced by Council resolution 2165 (2014). Despite the persistent assertions about its transparency, there is absolutely no sign of it. Inside Syria, everything is farmed out to various so-called third parties and partners, who for some reason are reluctant to be identified to the Council. There is evidence that part of the humanitarian aid coming from outside is being confiscated and stored by Jabhat Al-Nusra and its satellites in Idlib. Armed groups are extorting at checkpoints along the line of demarcation, and local authorities, escorted by terrorists, are extracting tribute from farmers and businesses.

The Secretary-General's report briefly touches on the problem in a reference to abuses at the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing. However, the description does not convey the scale of the manipulations, with Al-Nusra's participation. The data shows that in 2015 and 2016, the forces controlling that border crossing from the Syrian side were making $2 million a month. It is difficult to believe that no one in the United Nations was aware of the scale of these operations. The Secretary-General's survey of the situation has made none of it any clearer. The reality is that the situation on the ground in Syria has significantly changed, and that should be reflected in a comparable way in the adjustment of the cross-border mechanism.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of November, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of China to the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives and their staffs, and to the Security Council Affairs Division for all the support they have given us. It has definitely been a busy month in which we have rallied to achieve consensus on several important issues within our

purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, including the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the interpreters, translators and verbatim reporters, and the security staff. As we end our presidency, I know that I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire good luck for the month of December.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8412

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8412th meeting

Tuesday, 4 December 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Adom	(Côte d'Ivoire)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Gebru
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

Letter dated 15 November 2018 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/1031)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-41307 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to take this opportunity to pay sincere tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Ma Zhaoxu, Permanent Representative of China, for his service as President of the Council for the month of November. I am sure that I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Ma and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

Letter dated 15 November 2018 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/1031)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/1031, which contains a letter dated 15 November 2018 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant addressed to the President of the Security Council

I now give the floor to Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan: It is indeed a singular honour and a privilege to present the first report of the United Nations investigative team to promote accountability for crimes allegedly committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da'esh (see S/2018/1031). We intend to outline today our initial strategic vision, the progress made to date in its realization and our key priorities as we now continue our preparatory work in Iraq ahead of the commencement of more meaningful and substantive investigative work early next year.

I would like, however, to begin with the obvious, but something that requires us all, in my respectful submission, to have pause for thought. It is to applaud the indefatigable courage and perseverance and recognize the tremendous suffering of the survivors of Da'esh crimes. Their fortitude in standing firm and continuing is an aspect that must be recognized and be at the forefront of our minds. In that endeavour, of course, the unity and united perseverance of the people of Iraq in defeating ISIL territorially are an aspect that must be mentioned.

As ISIL has been driven from its strongholds, the scope and magnitude of its heinous acts have become tragically ever more clear. Witness testimony after witness testimony has revealed unimaginable abuses and acts of depravity. Thousands of our fellow human beings — men and thousands upon thousands of women and children — have become victims at the hands of ISIL and witnesses to its deeds. By dint of resolution 2379 (2017), the Security Council responded unanimously with one clear voice to the call of assistance, which had been raised by the Government of the Republic of Iraq in support of its efforts to hold ISIL accountable.

Noting that the terrorist acts of ISIL constituted a threat to international peace and security, the Council requested the establishment of the Investigative Team in order to support domestic efforts to establish accountability, requiring us to collect, gather, analyse and store evidence in Iraq of crimes that may constitute genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. In addition, the Council underlined that, as Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team, I would be required to promote throughout the world accountability for the crimes of Da'esh and work with survivors in a manner consistent with now well-established human rights norms and best United Nations practices. That was for one imperative and one purpose —to ensure that those crimes are recognized within the disciplined environment of the law. That aspect is discussed in further detail in our report (see S/2018/1031), dated 16 November.

Turning to the next topic of this briefing, I take this opportunity to express gratitude to the Council and the Government of Iraq for the significant trust that they have reposed in the Investigative Team in that important mandate and to reiterate what should be obvious, which is our absolute commitment to showing fidelity to the mandate and resolution 2379 (2017) in a bid to ensure that those have committed those acts are investigated and pursued in accordance with best United Nations practices and international law so that we can deliver on our mandate.

Since the formal commencement of its activities on 20 August, the Investigative Team has undertaken key preparatory work, pursuant to the mandate provided by the Council, in order to provide what we hope will prove to be a solid platform for the commencement of investigative activities early next year. As a result of those efforts and based on the support of key partners within the United Nations system, including — it must be recognized — the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Field Support, as well as the unstinting support of the Office of Legal Affairs, the Investigative Team successfully deployed to Iraq on 29 October.

In conducting the preparatory activities outlined in our first report, we have been guided at all times by two key imperatives. First, the Team must operate as an independent, impartial and credible accountability mechanism capable of conducting all its work to the highest possible standards. Secondly, there is a need to ensure that our work is carried out collaboratively and cooperatively with the Government of Iraq, with full respect at all times for national sovereignty and in a manner that effectively harnesses the talents and engenders the support of all elements of Iraqi society.

As reflected in resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference for the activities of the Investigative Team (S/2018/118, annex), approved by the Council in February, those imperatives are not paradoxical, nor do they represent opposing weights of a scale to be delicately balanced. On the contrary, the establishment of the Team as an independent, impartial entity, and successful and meaningful engagement with the Government of Iraq and the broader populace of Iraq in its work represent, in our view, mutually reinforcing principles that, if harnessed effectively, will allow the Team to overcome the many challenges, it will face and deliver effectively on the mandate set down by the Council.

With a view to ensuring that the Investigative Team can conduct its work in an independent and impartial manner, in line with the international standards to which I alluded a moment ago, we have sought, during the first three months of our activities, to prioritize the development of core logistical, substantive and administrative frameworks, which have been reflected in the proposed budget of the Investigative Team currently under the consideration of the General Assembly.

With respect to the first aspect — our logistical arrangements — we have identified former United Nations facilities for refurbishment that will serve as our headquarters and permanent premises in Baghdad, and plans have also been developed regarding the physical and technological infrastructure that will be needed to support the material and evidence that we will receive and gather, as well. That will, we hope, ensure the effective storage of documentary, forensic and digital information, which would be the foundation of any proper investigation in accordance with international standards.

Secondly, with regard to the substantive framework, progress has also been made. Work has commenced on the development of various standing operating procedures of key activities, including the collection, preservation and storing of evidence and material, as well as information management and chains of custody. Those issues will be critical to witness protection. Initial mapping activities have already been undertaken, assisting us in identifying where key sources of existing evidentiary material may be located.

We have also spent a significant amount of time in ensuring that the admonition and injunction of the Council to avoid duplication are fully observed, and that has taken the form of reaching out to other parts of the United Nations, whether in the counter-terrorism sphere or other areas, such as the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, to ensure that we harness the capacities, the experience and the centres of excellence that are already present. All of that is to ensure that the Team operates as effectively and efficiently as possible and discharges its mandate.

Thirdly, with regard to the composition of the Investigative Team, requirements have been identified with respect to both international staff and national personnel, and the initial recruitment is progressing. In that regard, I wish to emphasize to the Council that I

am firmly of the view that the successful integration of Iraqi national professional personnel into the Team will be essential. It will enrich our capacities, allow us to operate more effectively in Iraq and, we hope, more fully and completely fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Council.

At all times, Organizationur objective will be to foster a mutually supportive relationship between international and national staff and mould it into one coherent, cohesive and unified entity, united by a common principle to investigate, in accordance with the best United Nations standards and international practices, acts that may have been committed by ISIL. In doing so, it is our fervent hope that we will also strengthen the capacity of the Team, assist in generating capacities in Iraq and deliver the mandate in an independent manner, which will, hopefully, support the long-term, sustainable efforts that Iraq is focusing on to achieve accountability.

Throughout the formative period of our work over the past three months, I have consistently underlined the fundamental imperative and the absolute commitment of the Investigative Team to ensuring that its actions are aligned with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations that remain the foundation of this organ, and also that we abide by United Nations policies and best practices, including with respect to the transmission of evidentiary material for use in domestic proceedings. As I have emphasized, our adherence to those principles is not only required by dint of the resolution itself, or indeed by the terms of reference that have been approved by the Council, but is also essential to ensuring the continued support of the international community and the credibility of this work.

It is a remarkable achievement, and both a sign of the unity of the Council on this issue and revealing of the criminality of the many acts carried out by Da'esh, that the Council was unanimous and the international community is in consensus that the rule of law and judicial accountability have an important and critical part to play in properly confronting the phenomena that we have unfortunately witnessed.

In pursuit of the second imperative of fostering collective support for our work in Iraq, the Investigative Team has prioritized the development of cooperative relationships with the Government of Iraq itself, as well as with the multitude of religious and ethnic groups and regional entities in Iraq. We have reached out to non-governmental bodies and other key national stakeholders and, as emphasized in our written report, we consider that that work will be crucial to the successful fulfilment of our mandate.

Reflecting this during my initial mission to Iraq in August, I met with senior Government officials, many survivors, civil society groups and members of Christian, Shia, Sunni, Turkmen Shia, Kakai and Yazidi communities. In those discussions, I emphasized to all, whoever my audience was at any given time, that there is no hierarchy of victims. The Investigative Team, in seeking to fulfil the mandate of the Council, will ensure that we focus on crimes committed against any human being — irrespective of ethnic group or religious denomination — who has suffered from those crimes within our jurisdiction at the hands of Da'esh.

Since our arrival in Iraq in October, the Investigative Team has continued to engage with the Government of Iraq with a view to establishing clear operational frameworks with our national counterparts. In that regard, productive discussions have already been held with the Steering Committee that has been designated under the terms of reference. We are also working on and clarifying the procedures that will form the bedrock of our activities. We have liaised productively and continuously with the relevant national security sectors in Iraq to ensure that the Team can undertake activities in a secure and safe manner.

Last week, I had the singular honour and opportunity to have a meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, during which I underlined the commitment of the Investigative Team to working in support of the domestic authorities of Iraq to ensure that members of ISIL are held accountable for their crimes. I was grateful to the Prime Minister that in that meeting, and afterwards in his public statements, he expressed in very solid terms, if I may say so, his continued support for the resolution, the Investigative Team and our focus on genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, which is to be applauded.

Our presence in Iraq has provided the Investigative Team with the opportunity to continue to engage with various survivor groups, tribal leaders and other non-governmental bodies. In that regard, I recently held in-depth discussions with tribal leaders from the Sinjar region and have put in place plans to visit that region later this month, in addition to other key sites of ISIL crimes. Since its arrival in Iraq, the Team has also

continued to build relationships with a broad range of Member States, many of which were initiated here in New York. We look forward to further strengthening those ties in support of our mandated activities over the coming months.

The Investigative Team now looks forward to continuing preparations in Iraq with a view to commencing investigative activities in early 2019. Based on our preparatory activities to date, and reflecting the consultations held with the Government of Iraq and other key national stakeholders, I wish to highlight to the Council the following key priorities for action, which are outlined, of course, in much greater detail in the report.

The first priority is the completion of key infrastructural elements, including the premises of the Investigative Team and the physical and technological equipment that I have referred to, which is necessary for the storage and preservation of evidence.

Secondly, we must finalize the core substantive work, including our standard operating practices and the recruitment process, which we hope to be able to kick off once the budget is approved by the General Assembly.

Thirdly, we must collect, gather and analyse the evidence within Iraq, and by that I mean that the central Government, the regional authorities, third States, non-governmental organizations, international actors and neighbouring States must bring all of that information together so that it can be subjected to analysis, so that patterns can be discerned and so that it can lead to the fourth stage, which relates to the activities of the Investigative Team to fill the gaps that have been identified. I look forward to presenting my next report in May 2019, which will provide a fuller update on those activities.

However, I wish to be candid with the Council in one additional respect. The delivery of this mandate and the successful completion of these activities require not just the historic, united and unanimous support of the Council, but collegiality and solidarity going forward. Without the political will and political support of Member States that have been fortunately evidenced to date, the significant challenges that are obvious on the face of the mandate will not be overcome. By the same token, with that solidarity the challenges and the scale of the evidence will not be insurmountable by the application of our collective will and the resources available in the international community and within the Team.

On a related topic, I take this opportunity to mention that the proposed budget of the Investigative Team has been submitted to the General Assembly for consideration. It is my sincere belief that we have presented a very streamlined organizational structure with a limited objective to meet our mandate. There is no fat in that budget. We have specifically designed a substantive capacity that will allow us to conduct our work in accordance with international standards and thereby ensure the broadest possible use of evidence within Iraq and, domestically, within States elsewhere. That plan, strategy and organizational structure are complemented by a very lightweight mission support mechanism that draws on existing United Nations in-country assets to ensure the maximum focus of resources where it is needed, which is in the substantive work of investigating the crimes themselves. It is my hope that the commitment to efficiency demonstrated in our proposed budget will be reflected on positively by Member States in the coming weeks as it is finalized and approved.

In addition, I would emphasize paragraph 14 of resolution 2379 (2017), which created a trust fund. I request that States also consider making supplementary contributions to the trust fund for key activities. Those activities are not just for the security and the staff costs of the team, but include exhumations, DNA analysis and witness support activities. I take this opportunity to state and underscore my appreciation for the very generous and absolutely vital contributions made thus far by the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Government of Qatar. I also know that various other States are working towards pledging further support.

In conclusion, I wish to underline to the Council that the preparatory work completed by the Team has reinforced my view that our dual initial imperatives — ensuring independence and seeking cooperation, and demonstrating impartiality and pursuing national engagement — do not present a dichotomy. There is no contradiction in upholding independence while supporting national accountability. Indeed, the opposite is true. It is only by establishing the Investigative Team as an independent, objective and trusted source of evidentiary material capable of conducting its work to the highest possible standards that we can best support the Government of Iraq and

other Member States in our common and necessary pursuit of accountability and justice. Simultaneous, the completion of our investigative activities will be dependent on securing the cooperation, support and trust of all elements of Iraqi society.

It is by harnessing those dual elements, both international and national, that we will be able to successfully fulfil the mandate the Council has provided and deliver justice for the victims of ISIL. As we look forward to the commencement of our investigative activities in Iraq, it is ultimately them and the cause of justice that we seek to serve.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Khan for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): Let me begin by repeating in the Chamber what I said in the consultations room — we offer you and your mission our congratulations, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency. We very much look forward to working with you and supporting you. We also congratulate our Chinese colleagues for the way they conducted the presidency last month.

I would also like to reiterate my condolences here in the Chamber to the United States of America on the death of George H. W. Bush, who I had the honour of meeting in the United Nations some 10 years ago.

Turning to today, I would like to thank the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant for his first briefing to the Council since the Team's deployment on 29 October. I think the Team has made a very good start and we look forward to its future work and briefings.

The Special Adviser said that we really ought to pay tribute to the suffering and the indefatigable courage of the survivors of Da'esh violence. I think that is absolutely right. Justice and accountability for the victims need to be at the centre of our approach, and I want to commend the new Government of Iraq for its commitment to supporting the work of the Investigative Team. We also welcome the continued support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for the Team, and I would like to recognize UNAMI's efforts to facilitate the deployment of the Investigative Team to Baghdad. It is important that all efforts on the ground be complementary and avoid duplication, and we are very pleased that the Team's budget proposal reflects the importance of all efforts complementing each other.

We are encouraged to see the work of the team so far and welcome the fact that there have been contributions from the Government of Iraq, from UNAMI, from allied nations and other United Nations bodies in supporting the Investigative Team.

I think it is crucial that we get these early stages right, including by establishing a mechanism for cooperation between the Investigative Team and the Government of Iraq. That is important for swift and thorough evidence collection, but it will also help ensure that evidence is suitable to be used before the courts. It will, of course, rely on a cooperative and mutually respectful relationship, which we are sure will be present.

The United Kingdom very much agrees with the strategic vision in the guiding principles regarding the Team's immediate priorities. We were pleased to see a very strong focus on engagement with the Government of Iraq. That will obviously be crucial to the success of the Team's work, and we encourage the Steering Committee designated by the Government of Iraq to meet on a regular basis with the Investigative Team, particularly during these early stages of implementation.

The Special Adviser mentioned the importance of voluntary contributions to the trust fund established pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017). I want to echo that sentiment. We think that should also cover voluntary contributions to the Investigative Team in the form of expertise and skills. I would like to pay tribute to Qatar and the Netherlands for their generous contributions. We ourselves have already donated to the trust fund and we remain committed to supporting the Investigative Team as it fulfils its mandate.

Going back to where I started, justice for victims remains at the heart of the resolution. It is vital that the Investigative Team help to secure accountability for the victims of the terrible crimes of Da'esh in order to bring closure to those who still suffer — including women, children and minority communities.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): Let me too reiterate in the open Chamber our congratulations to Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the

Council and our thanks and congratulations to China for its excellent presidency in November.

I also congratulate Special Adviser Khan on his appointment. I thank him for being here in person today to brief the Security Council for the first time. The United States looks forward to working closely with him to fulfil the critical mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Last year, the Government of Iraq asked for assistance in its efforts to hold members of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) accountable for atrocities. Knowing how pivotal a period it was in Iraq's rich history, Council members quickly responded by unanimously adopting resolution 2379 (2017). History has shown that swift and effective evidence collection after atrocities are perpetrated is critical to the ability to recover and move forward. The recent discovery in Iraq of more than 200 mass graves containing as many as 12,000 bodies makes today's discussions in the Council all the more important.

I am pleased to announce today that the United States intends to commit $2 million to support the efforts of the Investigative Team. We thank those who have already contributed, including the United Kingdom, Qatar and the Netherlands, and call on other countries to quickly lend their support as it begins to carry out its mandate. Of course, money alone will not guarantee the effective collection of evidence. We urge Iraq's new Government to continue working closely with the Team as well. Mr. Khan's meeting with Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi of Iraq is an important step in beginning that conversation.

No segment of Iraqi society has escaped the terror of ISIS, and it is important to develop a balanced and accurate account of events. That will give all Iraqis a voice, including members of every religious and ethnic group in Iraq that has been subjected to unspeakable crimes. The appointment of Iraqi experts to the Investigative Team, working alongside international experts, will be critical to its success. At the same time, the Government of Iraq must give the Team the space to operate effectively. Independence and impartiality are essential to its credibility going forward. In keeping with the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance coherence and collaboration across the United Nations system, it will also be essential for the Team to work closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and other relevant United Nations offices, as well as civil-society groups, in order to coordinate efforts on the ground. Its efforts must be matched with measures to protect and support the families of victims and the survivors of atrocious crimes, who are still living with trauma from their appalling experiences.

There is much to be optimistic about in Iraq today. We see Iraq's future in people like Nadia Murad, whose foundation, Nadia's Initiative, is dedicated to helping women and children who are victimized by genocide, mass atrocities and human trafficking. Through her efforts, Nadia has helped hundreds of Iraqi women and children heal and rebuild their lives, and has set an example to many Iraqis who are following her lead. She has had an immeasurable impact on the global conversation about ending the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The United States congratulates her on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018. Nadia is one of many Iraqis who bravely called on Council members to come together and adopt resolution 2379 (2017) unanimously. Special Adviser Khan's attendance at Nadia's Nobel award ceremony is an important illustration of the new role of the United Nations in seeking justice for Nadia and the many Iraqis like her. We want to once again thank the Government of Iraq and the Investigative Team for taking important steps towards demonstrating that justice is never beyond reach. ISIS will be held accountable for its many crimes against the Iraqi people once and for all.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to join others in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of December, and the Permanent Representative of China on his successful stewardship of the Council last month. We thank Mr. Khan for his first report to the Council (see S/2018/1031) on the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Resolution 2379 (2017) stresses the global nature of the threats posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It is therefore important that Council members form a united front in counteracting that evil. There can be no double standards in that fight, including with regard to seeing justice done. We are firmly of the view that the crimes of ISIL terrorists must not go unpunished, wherever they were committed. However,

it is the Governments of the States affected by those crimes that play the leading role in holding them to account. Resolution 2379 (2017), which represents the basis for the establishment of the Investigative Team, emphasizes in that regard that it must operate with full respect for Iraq's sovereignty and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on Iraqi territory. We hope those provisos will be an indisputable basis for the Investigative Team's operations.

We should point out that the fact that the Team was established at the request of the affected State is a bold kind of innovation for the Security Council with many new aspects. First, as a body it is neither judicial nor prosecutorial, but merely documents evidence. Furthermore, the evidence it collects has to be kept in Iraq and used by the Iraqi judicial system and other national judicial bodies exclusively upon the agreement with Baghdad. Unfortunately, it is very seldom that the views of the States concerned are so carefully taken into account. To take the example of the entity in Syria with similar functions — the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, which was the result of the General Assembly's illegitimate decision — it did not even occur to its so-called architects to talk to Damascus and they utterly disregarded the prerogatives of the Security Council. We want to caution the Investigative Team's leadership against any contact with that illegitimate entity.

We note Mr. Khan's willingness to work constructively to carry out the mandate entrusted to him, which we view first and foremost as in a context of criminal rather than international humanitarian law. We concluded from his report that his mission has support within Iraqi society, and we truly hope that approach will be maintained and welcome all steps in that direction.

We expect the Investigative Team's operations to be conducted impartially, transparently and in full compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and that it will make a meaningful contribution to the efforts to bring ISIL terrorists to justice for the crimes they have committed on Iraqi territory. That is important with regard to further counter-terrorism activities in Iraq. ISIL's so-called caliphate has been dealt a crushing blow, partly thanks to the uncompromising war against terrorism that the authorities in Iraq's neighbour Syria have been waging, with Russia's help. Despite that, however, ISIL still remains active in a number of Iraqi provinces and is still carrying out terrorist and asymmetrical attacks there.

For our part, we will continue to assist the Iraqi authorities on the security front both politically and practically, as well as in the work of establishing long-term normalization. We will continue to help strengthen the Iraqi army, including by coordinating on regional security issues through the quadripartite centre in Baghdad, and we intend to broaden our bilateral cooperation on other fronts as well.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we want to see Iraq become a strong, whole, independent and prosperous State where all of its various ethnic and religious groups can live in peace and harmony. We believe that all international assistance, including from the Investigative Team, must be part of the effort to achieve that goal, and the shortest road to that runs through robust national reconciliation processes.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your team on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of December. You can count on my full support and that of my entire delegation. I would also like to thank the Chinese delegation for its professional steering of the work of the Council during the month of November.

I would also like to echo the delegation of the United Kingdom in offering our condolences for the passing of the former President of the United States George H.W. Bush.

I would like to thank Special Adviser Khan for his very informative briefing and welcome him as he addresses the Council for the first time.

Please allow me to focus on three aspects today: first, supporting the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant; secondly, protecting and supporting survivors and victims; and thirdly, accountability.

First, we welcome the commencement of the work by Mr. Khan and his team and we have looked forward to this discussion and support the priorities as formulated in his first report (S/2018/1031). My Government feels strongly about the need for accountability for atrocity

crimes committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). These are crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, as mentioned by Mr. Khan in his briefing. We recognize that his investigations are starting in 2019 and that the task that lies ahead of him and the Iraqi Government is a vast one. Its continued support and cooperation are of course paramount, especially in a challenging security context. We expect that the Investigative Team will establish an effective working relationship with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq that is characterized by complementarity.

The Council adopted resolution 2379 (2017) unanimously, which is worth noting. Let me reiterate that Mr. Khan has the continued and full support of the Kingdom of Netherlands to end impunity for atrocity crimes committed by ISIS. That is why my Government announced that it would contribute financially to support the Investigative Team. We call on others that have not yet done so to follow suit.

Secondly, I want to speak about protecting and supporting survivors and victims. A week from today, Nadia Murad will receive her Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo — a recognition of her activism, which has shed light on some of the most terrible crimes imaginable. She has given a voice to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, the Yazidi community and other Iraqi victims.

Mr. Khan has written that survivors and victims should be at the centre of the work of the Investigative Team. We could not agree more and are happy to see our pledge be used for specialized psychological support and assistance to witnesses and victims. As the Investigative Team becomes fully operational in 2019, its ability to build relationships with affected communities — especially women — will be crucial. Inclusive communication with and towards communities is an important aspect of its work.

We count on the Team to secure, collect and preserve evidence in line with international standards; to protect witnesses brave enough to speak up and ensure the broadest use of the evidence collected; to give information to families that are missing loved ones; and, finally, to help demonstrate the extent of the atrocities committed by ISIS and its vile ideology so that it does not create new victims.

Thirdly, I have spoken about the need for accountability for individuals and communities alike. The work of the Investigative Team and the Iraqi Government is crucial to documenting and laying bare the despicable ideology and practice of ISIS and give it its rightful place in history going forward, and to helping to further reduce its appeal across the world. After all, the actions of ISIS in Iraq led to the gravest kind of crimes. In this light, we look forward to Iraq's implementation of international crimes into national legislation. This would be a significant and very positive development. In order to achieve justice and eventually reconciliation, it is our understanding that evidence gathered by the Investigative Team should be used only in prosecutions that comply with the highest international legal standards, and that no capital punishment will be applied.

In closing, I want to wish Special Adviser Khan and his team the best of luck with the valuable and substantial tasks that lie ahead of them.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month and wishing you every success. At the same time, we thank the Chinese delegation for its presidency of the Council for last month.

I join previous speakers in expressing my deepest condolences to the United States Administration and the American people following the passing of former President George H.W. Bush who served as the permanent representative of his country to the United Nations and presided over the Security Council in May 1972. Our condolences also go to his family. President George H.W. Bush holds a special place in the Administration, the leadership and the hearts of the people of Kuwait, thanks to the leading and historical role he played in mobilizing political and military support for the formation of the great international coalition, led by the United States of America. That contributed to liberating the State of Kuwait from the 1991 occupation, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the embodiment of the concept of collective security. The principled and courageous attitudes by the President George H.W. Bush and his support for justice and rights will not be forgotten by the people of Kuwait, and will remain entrenched in their memory.

I would like to thank Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for

Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant for his valuable briefing on the important issue before us today. We also welcome his first report (S/2018/1031) as a road map for the Investigative Team. We wish Mr. Khan and his team every success in carrying out the difficult and sensitive task ahead. We hope that the Investigative Team will be able to discharge its mission to ensure that the perpetrators of the most atrocious crimes against the brotherly Iraqi people are held accountable. That would represent a fundamental part of the comprehensive systematic approach to eliminating terrorism.

Resolution 2379 (2017) established a mechanism that represented a victory for humanitarian justice and for reparation to victims. That mechanism was formed in response to the Iraqi Government's request to guarantee that the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes — which could constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide — would not enjoy impunity, while fully respecting the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territories. We believe that the mechanism is an important deterrent to terrorists. We are hopeful that the priorities identified by the Investigative Team in its first report, as well as the commitments undertaken by the Iraqi Government to support and facilitate the mission of the Investigative Team, will bring the perpetrators to justice under Iraqi law.

In that respect, we greatly appreciate the sacrifices and the heroic actions undertaken by the brotherly Iraqi people. Allow me therefore to congratulate the daughter of Iraq, Ms. Nadia Murad, on winning the Nobel Peace Prize and wish her every success. Her humanitarian message encompasses a true sense of heroism and serves to heal the wounds caused by the so-called Da'esh terrorist organization in Iraq. It is indeed a source of hope and optimism.

Kuwait has stood alongside Iraq throughout the difficult circumstances it has endured, including within the framework of the international coalition against Da'esh. We have provided logistical support and hosted a number of international coalition meetings. Aware of the serious challenges that brotherly Iraq is facing after defeating the so-called Da'esh, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, took the initiative in calling for the convening in Kuwait the International Kuwait Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq in February, which was co-chaired by Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. The Conference raised $30 billion, which was donated by participating countries as well as representatives of the private sector and civil society organizations. Those contributions took the form of development loans, subsidized loans and investments. They will help to improve living conditions, develop infrastructure, provide basic services and create a safe environment in the areas freed from the terrorists in Iraq.

In conclusion, it is high time for Iraq to recover following the tragic events it has experienced in recent years while fighting against Da'esh. Once again, Kuwait expresses its solidarity with the Government and the people of Iraq in any measures they undertake to roll back terrorism, prevent the expansion of terrorist activities and prosecute the perpetrators of those atrocious crimes by bringing them to justice. We will support such measures in order to consolidate Iraqi national unity and preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December and to assure you, Mr. President, of our support. I would also like to express our great appreciation to the delegation of China for its able, constructive and productive presidency in November.

My delegation thanks the United Kingdom for calling for this meeting to re-confirm the readiness of the members of the Security to fight terrorism and support the people and the Government of Iraq. We believe such efforts will move Iraqis along the path to peace, stability and unity. I also welcome Special Adviser Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, appointed on 13 July as Head of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), established by resolution 2379 (2017) to collect, preserve and ensure the storage of evidence from that terrorist group in Iraq. I thank him for his most informative briefing.

We believe that resolution 2379 (2017), adopted unanimously in September last year, was a testament to the full support of the international community to combat the common evil of terrorism, which threatens the entire world. The resolution, which requested the establishment of an investigative team to bring ISIL (Da'esh) to justice, was an important milestone in

ensuring the prosecution of that terrorist group for all the atrocities it committed in and outside Iraq. We are convinced that those criminals are equally guilty for also destroying cultural heritage sites. Our delegation has high hopes for Special Adviser Khan and his team.

We welcome the intensive preparatory work conducted by the Investigative Team in such a short period, and support its vision for investigating and gathering of evidence of crimes committed by ISIL. That should include cooperation with all organizations, agencies of the United Nations, the private sector, academia, media and non-governmental agencies. It is important that the documentary evidence be preserved in accordance with international standards. We will also need outreach research activities from relevant non-governmental and civic organizations, including groups of victims, as our partners, to ensure the Investigative Team's credibility and effective operations.

We note the importance of ensuring adequate protection and support for the victims of ISIL in order for their voices to be heard and become a decisive factor for investigative activities and future courts. In that regard, we welcome the intention to create a specialized group for the protection of victims and witnesses, which will be responsible for providing advice and assistance to the investigative team to ensure maximum protection for witnesses and victims.

We note with satisfaction the holding, on 17 October 2018 in the framework of the Committee pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), of a briefing by Mr. Khan on the implementation of resolution 2379 (2017). According to its mandate, the Investigative Team can interact with all structures of the United Nations and subsidiary bodies connected with suppressing ISIL activities and investigating its crimes. In that regard, we welcome the support expressed by the members of the 1267 Committee for the provision of comprehensive assistance to the work of the Investigative Team under the leadership of the Special Adviser. Kazakhstan firmly believes that solving the complex problem of international terrorism would entail greater coordination and a holistic, systemic and innovative approach by the entire international community, represented by Member States and international organizations.

Kazakhstan, which deeply believes in human dignity, justice and freedom, joins other Member States in upholding and fully implementing resolution 2379 (2017), in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are sure that the elimination of socioeconomic factors that give rise to terrorism will prevent the return of chaos, suffering and irreparable loss for the civilian population and give them new hope for a better future. In conclusion, I would like to reassure the Council of Kazakhstan's commitment to combat international terrorism, including by implementing relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 2379 (2017).

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to join other delegations in expressing our sincerest condolences on the passing away of a great statesman, on both the national and international stage, former United States President George Herbert Walker Bush. We convey our sympathy to his family and to the American people for this loss.

Let me also express our sincere congratulations to Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We wish it every success. We also pay tribute to China for its excellent presidency during the month of November.

First of all, we would like to express our sincere congratulations to the Secretariat and Special Adviser Karim Asad Ahmad Khan and his team for their great efforts since the Council adopted resolution 2379 (2017), on 21 September 2017, which required the Secretary-General to appoint an investigative team to support the efforts of the Iraqi Government to establish responsibility for the crimes committed in Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh). Our delegation is very pleased that, following a very complicated, arduous and difficult process, Mr. Khan has presented us with the first report on his work (see S/2018/1031), following his appointment on 13 July.

The report of the Investigative Team, which we consider preliminary given the recent start of the Team's activities and the complexity of the work it must carry out, basically illustrates the details of the strategic vision for the activities that the Investigative Team will carry out as an independent and impartial mechanism pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017). There is no doubt as to the great and eager expectations for future reports to be presented to the Council on the crimes of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, given the monumental and terrifying details that have been emerging about crimes committed by Da'esh during the period between June 2014 and December 2017, during

which Da'esh occupied, controlled and operated with impunity in large areas of Iraq, committing all kinds of crimes that involve serious violations of international law, human rights law, international criminal law and international humanitarian law, and which constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Several witness accounts confirm that during its occupation Da'esh carried out serious crimes against the civilian population in the territories under its control. More than 200 mass graves have been discovered that hold the remains of many thousands of men, women and children — atrocious loss of human life, with the attendant terrible, horrendous suffering.

In view of the devastating magnitude of those crimes, which are being discovered and will continue to be in future, and with the aim of clearly establishing responsibility so as to ensure proper accountability for those responsible for such acts, it is necessary that the international community and the United Nations provide the Investigative Team all the necessary support, including basic infrastructure, funding, logistical means, other resources and, even more important, as Mr. Khan states in his report, solidarity and unanimous support from the Council, its members and the States Members of the United Nations. That support should include clear political will so that that the Team can successfully carry out its work and eventually expose to the light of day all of the crimes that have been committed, including identifying the perpetrators. That work — which should always be carried out while observing impartiality and independence, offering collective support to Iraq and adhering to optimal international standards and practices, with focus on those with greater responsibility in the commission of the crimes and in close collaboration with other international agencies in the region with competence on the issues — will allow the international community not only to know the magnitude of the crimes and their perpetrators and ensure accountability, but will inevitably awaken awareness of the need to stop and prevent the repetition of such acts in other armed conflict settings.

In conclusion, our delegation wishes great courage, determination and success to Mr. Khan and his entire team in the formidable and complex mission that has been entrusted to them by the United Nations. At the same time, we assure him of the support of the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in his duties.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): We would like to join others in wishing Côte d'Ivoire every success during its presidency of the Security Council for the month of December, and we congratulate China on its presidency in November.

I also wish to reiterate the condolences offered by President Emmanuel Macron to the American people following the death of former President Bush.

We would like to congratulate Mr. Karim Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2379 (2017), on his appointment and progress report (see S/2018/1031). We hope to see him appear regularly before the Security Council to report on the progress of the work of the Investigative Team.

The international community, including France, has stood alongside the Iraqi authorities in the fight against terrorism. We are now also standing with them in their reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, without which there can be no lasting peace in Iraq. A few days ago, President Macron made a pledge to the fund launched by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Nadia Murad, who embodies hope for the Iraqi people and for all the victims of Da'esh regardless of their ethnicity, religion or gender. France's contribution to the fund will go towards the reconstruction of Sinjar, a region particularly scarred by the abuses of Da'esh, as pointed out by Mr. Khan earlier.

Furthermore, in 2019 France will host the next follow-up conference of the Paris action plan in support of victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East. The plan includes an important component on the fight against impunity in terms of technical assistance, training personnel and identifying victims and providing them psychological support. A fund for victims of ethnic and religious violence was also set up. We believe that the operationalization of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant will fully contribute to that goal.

Solid foundations have been put in place over the past three months for the Investigative Team to fulfil the mandate set by the Security Council in resolution 2379 (2017) and its terms of reference, in keeping with United Nations policies and best practices. In that regard, we take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/253) that outlines the policy of non-sharing by international accountability mechanisms of evidence

for use in the context of criminal proceedings in which the death penalty could be imposed or carried out. Three points seem essential to support the Special Adviser and his Investigative Team.

The first point is that the Investigative Team must have the resources it needs, starting with financial resources. That has been said several times before me. We also call on the Special Adviser to ensure that staff members are recruited in such a way as to ensure diversity in terms of gender, language and legal tradition.

The second element is cooperation — first with Iraq. We welcome the commitment of the newly elected Iraqi Government and the establishment of a steering committee to set the terms for that cooperation. We also note the concern of the Investigative Team with respect to involving all the relevant actors in Iraq, including non-governmental organizations, religious minorities and victims' representatives. Cooperation with United Nations mechanisms is also important. We particularly welcome cooperation with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which has a broad mandate to protect human rights and support the rule of law. The cooperation of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and its Team of Experts is also essential, as recalled earlier by the representative of Kazakhstan.

The third aspect is support for justice. The Investigative Team must collect and store evidence that could be used in fair and equitable court proceedings, first in Iraq. We support the efforts of the Iraqi authorities to strengthen the judicial and governance systems. In addition, the victims of Da'esh must have access to justice everywhere. That is something the Investigative Team should also monitor.

Finally, France will continue to support national reconciliation and the fight against impunity, which are inextricably linked. The Investigative Team is an important tool that is complementary to the measures undertaken by the Iraqi authorities to ensure that all the most serious crimes committed in Iraq are brought before the courts, whoever the perpetrators and victims may be. Iraq was able to defeat Da'esh militarily, to hold parliamentary elections in good conditions and to proceed with the appointment of new authorities. It is now important to work towards the implementation of inclusive governance that is based on the rule of law and that serves the interests of all segments of Iraqi society, in stability and prosperity, with the support of the international community.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. You can count on our support. Let me also thank the Chinese delegation for its very able stewardship of the work of this body during the month of November.

Allow me also to offer my most sincerest condolences to the American people on the passing of former President Bush, who played quite an important role in assisting the peaceful and democratic transition in Poland and in our part of Europe starting in 1989.

Let me also thank Mr. Khan and his team for the report (see S/2018/1031) and the very informative briefing. His work, which consists in the collection, preservation and storage of evidence, remains crucial to achieving accountability and to providing justice for the victims of the crimes committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Allow me also to commend the Iraqi authorities for their cooperation with Mr. Khan's team.

As Mr. Khan rightly pointed out, resolution 2379 (2017) is of crucial importance. By that resolution the Security Council recognized, in a united way, the importance of judicial accountability to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that context, for the record, let me stress that we cannot agree with the view expressed in the Chamber by one delegation that the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, is illegal. There is no basis to question the legality of that body, which was established by General Assembly resolution 71/248. That claim also runs counter to the spirit of resolution 2379 (2017), concerning the importance of accountability.

Poland welcomes the commencement of the Investigative Team's preparatory activities, the development of a strategic vision and guiding principles for the Team's activities, as well as the implementation of the financial, logistical and administrative

measures necessary to facilitate the commencement of its substantive work. We look forward to the Team's achievement of its full operational capabilities. We encourage all United Nations agencies to collaborate closely with the Team and provide it with all necessary assistance in fulfilling its mandate. As Mr. Khan stressed, he and his Team need solidarity and support. Let me assure him of Poland's full solidarity and support for his extremely important work.

We strongly believe that in order to advance national reconciliation and restore stability in Iraq, it is vital to deliver justice to the victims of atrocities committed by terrorist groups by holding the perpetrators of those crimes accountable. Accomplishing this goal will require, inter alia, carrying out thorough investigations, evidential material collection and analysis. It should be done in accordance with the highest international standards and in close cooperation and communication with the Iraqi authorities to ensure the broadest possible usability and admissibility of such evidence and materials before national courts and by national investigative and prosecutorial authorities.

We welcome the planned inclusion of Iraqi personnel in the Team, who will work on an equal footing with international staff members. We are convinced that their participation will not only increase the effectiveness of the Team's work and its capacity to deliver on its mandate, but will also enhance support for its activities among the Iraqi population. We hope that it will also help to maximize the potential use of its evidentiary material in credible, impartial and independent domestic criminal proceedings conducted by competent domestic courts in Iraq and in third States, as well as enhance existing accountability processes, commence new fair proceedings and contribute to reconciliation and stabilization. We highly appreciate the recognition of the need to ensure geographic diversity and gender, ethnic and religious balance in appointing the Iraqi members of the Investigative Team, which will reflect the diversity of the Iraqi population and increase the Team's capabilities in collecting evidence in various communities affected by Da'esh.

The provision of protection and support for the victims should be paramount. Therefore, we commend the intent to establish the victim and witness protection unit with the aim of facilitating the delivery of appropriate support.

With regard to the efforts to provide accountability for the crimes committed by terrorist groups, we encourage the Iraqi authorities and the Investigative Team to pay special attention to sexual and gender-based crimes in prosecutions of Da'esh fighters, as already highlighted by other delegations. Particular emphasis should also be placed on investigating all violations and abuses committed against children. In addition, it is, in our view, indispensable to avoid the penalization of women and children who are of Da'esh families and who have no link to the organization.

In conclusion, let me reiterate once again Poland's support for the Investigative Team and call for cooperation with the Special Adviser and the Team in fulfilling its important mandate. Allow me to stress the importance of carrying it out in accordance with United Nations best practices and policies, including on sharing evidence for use in criminal proceedings in which capital punishment could be imposed or carried out, as well as relevant international law, including international human rights law, rules and standards, notably those relevant to fair trial and due process. Let me finally once more acknowledge the commitment of the Special Adviser to achieving the full operational capabilities of the Investigative Team and ensuring full compliance with the Team's mandate, in accordance with resolution 2379 (2017), and wish him and the Team the best of success in fulfilling their important tasks.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Let me too congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation on assuming the presidency and assure you, Sir, of our full support during the month of December. Let me also take this opportunity to thank China for an impeccably run presidency in November.

I would like to thank Special Adviser Khan for his informative briefing. No doubt, he has a very challenging set of tasks ahead, but he can certainly count on Sweden's continued full support in his endeavour.

I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Nadia Murad on having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end sexual violence in conflict. This is an important recognition on behalf of all the victims of Da'esh, giving impetus to the efforts of holding those responsible to account.

Advancing accountability for the violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and human rights law in the conflicts on the Council's agenda has proven extremely difficult. The unanimous support

for the decision to establish the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is therefore particularly significant and a major achievement. We now need to stay united in actively supporting the implementation of this important mandate.

In this regard, we welcome the strategic vision and priorities set out by the Special Adviser today, in particular the victims-based approach, putting at the centre those most impacted by the crimes. The many examples in reports of the Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Patten remind us again and again why this victims-based approach is so important. In this context, we also underline that children with perceived or actual association with Da'esh are — first and foremost — victims and must be treated as such. Collective support for and trust in the mechanism on the part of those affected will be crucial. The establishment of a specialized victim and witness protection unit is therefore important.

It is crucial to ensure that the Team is adequately equipped with the expertise and resources needed. The Team must be able to effectively gather evidence for the crimes that have been committed against men, women and children, including sexual and gender-based violence. We are pleased that the Team foresees close cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

The operational and security environment in Iraq is very complex. We agree with Mr. Khan's conclusion that innovative logistical and operational solutions will be necessary. Strong Iraqi support and buy-in will be decisive to the success of the Team's work. Mr. Khan's recent meeting with Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi was a positive step in this regard. We welcome regular interaction and coordination between Mr. Khan's team and the Steering Committee designated by the Iraqi Government. As an independent and impartial institution, the Team can also play a key role in supporting the Iraqi Government in building capacity in the legal sector. The cooperation between the Team and the Iraqi Government can be mutually reinforcing.

We welcome the Team's intention to achieve geographical diversity, as well as gender, ethnic and religious balance, among its Iraqi members. The Team's development of trusting relationships with religious and ethnic minority groups, non-governmental organizations and other national stakeholders will be central. The support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the wider United Nations system is also important.

Accountability for all atrocity crimes committed in Iraq is crucial. The quest for accountability will contribute to reconciliation and long-term peace. In this regard, the rule of law and the Iraqi legal system must be strengthened, both in the long term and with respect to legal processes against suspected Da'esh members currently being pursued by Iraqi courts. We encourage Iraqi authorities to put in place national legislation that ensures that perpetrators of international crimes are tried in Iraq, in full accordance with the principles of rule of law and due process. United Nations support will be vital in that regard, and we remain strongly opposed to the death penalty. In accordance with United Nations policies and best practices, evidence gathered by the Investigative Team will not be used in trials that may lead to capital punishment. That issue must continue to be closely followed.

Sweden was among the first countries to prosecute suspected perpetrators of alleged war crimes in Iraq, as well as in Syria. We look forward to the Team's support for universal jurisdiction, including the exchange of information and potential support for the prosecution of Da'esh crimes in other national jurisdictions through mutual legal assistance.

In conclusion, promoting accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh is a matter of urgency. It requires political courage, as well as continued, united international support. Iraq can rely on Sweden as a committed partner in that moving forward.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China congratulates Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We will offer you all our support, Sir. We appreciate the support of all relevant parties during China's presidency of the Council.

China extends its condolences on the passing of former United States President George H.W. Bush and presents its sympathy to his family members.

Iraq is currently at a critical stage of national peace, stability and reconstruction. An inclusive political solution is the only way to achieve lasting peace and

security in Iraq. China hopes that the new Government of Iraq will make further progress in promoting economic development, improving standards of living and accelerating the reconstruction process.

The activities carried out by terrorists in Iraq claimed massive civilian casualties and posed a severe threat to peace and security in Iraq and to regional and international peace and security. China commends the Government and the people of Iraq for their tireless efforts to counter terrorism, and supports Iraq's efforts to bring terrorists to justice, in accordance with relevant domestic laws.

China takes note of the first report of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (see S/2018/1031), and commends the Team's work. China supports the Investigative Team in its efforts to protect the victims of terrorism and cooperate with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and other mechanisms so as to avoid the duplication of functions. It is our hope that the Investigative Team will act consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and in strict compliance with resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference in fulfilling its mandate. We also hope that the Investigative Team, in consultation with the Government of Iraq and all relevant parties, will develop a detailed implementation strategy and complete its initial deployment at an early date, prioritizing the collection and analysis of existing evidence and conducting targeted, field-based investigations.

As noted in the report, the ability of the Investigative Team to address challenges effectively will depend on its ability to maintain the trust and support of the people of Iraq. The Investigative Team should fully respect Iraq's sovereignty and jurisdiction over crimes committed in its territory, thereby playing a positive role in enhancing the capacities of the Iraqi Government to hold terrorist groups accountable for their crimes.

The situation of international counter-terrorism efforts remains serious as terrorist forces use diverse means to conduct terrorist activities and spread extremist ideas. The international community should enhance its cooperation, unify its standards and adopt concrete measures to resolutely fight all terrorist groups designated by the Security Council. China stands ready to continue to work with the international community to make further progress in international counter-terrorism cooperation.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to offer our warmest wishes for success to you, Sir, and your team as you assume the presidency of the Security Council. You can depend on our full support.

I also thank and commend the delegation of China for its conduct of the presidency last month with utmost probity and professionalism.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru has said in an official communiqué, we offer our deepest condolences over the passing of former United States President George H.W. Bush.

We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefing delivered by Mr. Karim Khan. We welcome his appointment and express our support for the vision, priorities and initial actions of his management.

Peru, a sponsor of resolution 2379 (2017), by which the Council established the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, considers it essential to support Iraq in its efforts with a view to guaranteeing access to justice and contributing to reconciliation in that country. We stress the importance of the Investigation Team being recognized as an impartial and independent actor, and that its action be guided by the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international human rights law.

We also stress the need to make available to the Investigation Team the resources necessary for, among other aspects related to the fulfilment of its mandate, the physical and technological infrastructure required to preserve the evidence it has been collecting. In that connection, we stress the Special Adviser's intention to establish a specialized unit for the protection of victims and witnesses, which we consider to be essential for the fulfilment of his mandate.

We consider it important that the Investigative Team, the Iraqi authorities and civil society maintain fluid cooperation, in line with the terms of reference approved by the Council and with an eventual headquarters agreement, and that they continue to be assisted by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. Moreover, we consider it necessary for the work of the Investigative Team to be consistent with

the various entities of the United Nations system, including the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, as well as with the Counter-Terrorism Committee. We highlight the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which last October facilitated the deployment of the Investigative Team in Baghdad.

We must remember that, despite the evident progress in the fight against Da'esh, the threat it represents is still latent in new modalities. The work of the Investigative Team in promoting the rule of law and the fight against impunity is essential in order to confront that threat more effectively. In this regard, in addition to highlighting the progress made in the current phase of gathering evidence, we note the desirability of the Council's promoting the cooperation required so that the competent authorities of other countries and supranational bodies can also enjoy access to them in order to guarantee access to justice.

Mr. Gebru (Ethiopia): Let me join other members of the Security Council in congratulating Côte d'Ivoire on its assumption of the presidency of the Council this month, and we assure you, Sir, of Ethiopia's support and cooperation. We also congratulate China on the successful completion of its work during its presidency for the month of November.

We extend our sincere condolences to the United States of America on the passing of former President George H.W. Bush.

We thank Special Adviser Khan for his first briefing on Da'esh accountability in Iraq. It was under Ethiopia's presidency that resolution 2379 (2017) was adopted, with a view to ensuring the accountability of members of Da'esh for their crimes in Iraq, including cases that may amount to crimes against humanity. The adoption of the resolution was an appropriate response to the request made by the Government of Iraq calling for the assistance of the international community in ensuring the accountability of members of Da'esh for the crimes they committed.

Through its commission of acts involving murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, suicide bombings and the destruction of cultural heritage, Da'esh has committed very serious crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. We will never forget the loss of our compatriots who were mercilessly massacred by Da'esh in Libya, and that is one of the reasons that we supported the adoption of resolution 2379 (2017): to hold members of Da'esh accountable for the crimes committed in Iraq.

In that regard, we support the establishment of the Investigative Team, headed by a Special Adviser, to support Iraq's efforts by collecting and preserving evidence of acts that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed by Da'esh. We believe that that should be done with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on its territory.

We note that the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh formally began its work and submitted its first report (see S/2018/1031) on the basis of resolution 2379 (2017). We also note that the Special Adviser briefed the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. Furthermore, we note his visit to Iraq and the series of engagements with senior officials from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of Government at various levels, as well as with survivors, civil society groups and members of different communities.

In the light of the severity of the crimes committed by Da'esh and the magnitude of the challenge the country faces, Iraq will need appropriate technical support and capacity-building. It is important that Member States, as well as regional and international organizations, provide appropriate legal assistance and capacity-building to the Government of Iraq in order to strengthen its courts and judicial system. Let me conclude by expressing our full support for the efforts aimed at ensuring the accountability of Da'esh members for all of the crimes they have committed, not only in Iraq but also in other parts of the world.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to join other delegations that have spoken before me in congratulating you, Mr. President, and the entire delegation of Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to take this opportunity to commend the delegation of China for efficiently steering the work of the Council during the month of November. We are grateful for

the report introduced by the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (S/2018/1031), Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, to whom we express our full support in the fulfilment of his mandate.

My delegation wishes to highlight the report submitted by the Special Adviser on the progress made in coordinating and establishing the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, with a view to fulfilling and implementing the mandate established under resolution 2379 (2017). We encourage continuing to work together with all of the institutions that form the United Nations system, and especially continuing to develop ties and good relations with the Government and the people of Iraq.

Today Iraq has a new democratically elected Government that must now confront the challenges associated with the transition from a post-conflict situation, which includes rebuilding practically the entire country and, in particular, ensuring reconciliation and judicial accountability. Nonetheless, Iraq continues to face the threat posed by Da'esh, given that, despite the defeat of that terrorist organization in large parts of the country, it is still capable of perpetrating asymmetrical attacks against the civilian population and its infrastructure, as well as against the forces of law and order. That has been proven by the attacks reported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq against the populations in Baghdad, Ninawa and Kirkuk, among others.

Furthermore, the discovery of more than 200 mass graves that could contain the remains of more than 12,000 victims of Da'esh — mainly women, children, people with disabilities and members of the Iraqi forces — highlights the brutality and criminality of that terrorist organization and the urgent need to identify the perpetrators of those crimes so that they can be held accountable for their actions. In that regard, and taking into account the seriousness of the crimes against humanity committed by Da'esh, we encourage the Investigative Team to cooperate with and assist the Government of Iraq in preserving the integrity of those mass graves, with the objective of collecting and preserving as much evidence as possible in order to help carry out the investigations and corresponding judicial processes that will guarantee that those violations do not go unpunished, as well as to identify the victims and return their bodies to their families.

To that end, it is important that the Investigative Team strengthen capacity-building in order to set up genetic databases that will allow for the exhumation and identification of the bodies of victims, which will strengthen their investigative work. The development and implementation of measures on the management and stewardship of all of the evidence collected, as well as the provision of protection and assistance to survivors and witnesses, must comply with the highest international standards.

It is also essential that the Investigative Team develop synergies and work closely not only with the different offices and agencies of the United Nations system, but also with the various subsidiary bodies of the Council, such as the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; and the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

We reiterate that the work of the Investigative Team in fulfilling its mandate should be carried out while observing and respecting the sovereignty of Iraq and maintaining its impartiality, independence and credibility, so that the investigations supported by the evidence obtained by the Team are able to meet the highest criteria of justice.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that policies of regime change, interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of States have been some of the main causes of Government vacuums and have contributed to the weakening of the forces of law and order, thereby facilitating the emergence of terrorism and extremism in the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

I would like to express my condolences and extend those of Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire — who will be sitting here in the Chamber tomorrow for the high-level debate — on behalf of the Ivorian Government and its people, on the death of George Herbert Walker Bush, the forty-first President of the United States of America, who was one of the most eminent members of the Security Council.

My delegation is grateful to Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan for the introduction of his report (see S/2018/1031). The report provides information on the arrangements that the Investigative Team intends to put in place for the effective implementation of resolution 2379 (2017), of 21 September 2017. As this is the first report submitted by Mr. Khan to the Council, Côte d'Ivoire would like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate him on his appointment to that post and wish him every success in carrying out the duties entrusted to him by the Secretary-General.

The recent discovery of 202 mass graves with more than 12,000 bodies in the northern and western provinces of Iraq, previously under the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, testifies to the cruelty of that terrorist group and calls on our Council to consider the urgent need to operationalize the Investigation Team. To that end, my country calls on all Member States to show unfailing solidarity with the Team so that it can effectively carry out its mission.

Despite the recent military setbacks in Iraq, Da'esh continues to pose a serious threat to the country's stability and to international peace and security, with more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters from approximately 100 countries, its new modus operandi through the diversification of its financial resources, the use of social media and the manipulation of local tribes. Hence the urgent need to mobilize all efforts to put an end to the activities of that terrorist group as soon as possible, particularly through the implementation of the relevant Council resolutions.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to commend the efforts made by the United Nations and the international community to strengthen the means of combating terrorism, which undermines the development efforts of many States and affects the lives of thousands of individuals. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the reforms undertaken to restructure and improve the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture, in particular through the establishment of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the adoption of resolution 2354 (2017), on the document entitled "Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives" (S/2017/375), together with guiding principles and good practices to effectively combat the means used by Da'esh and Al-Qaida to spread terrorism throughout the world. My delegation would note the Council's responsibility in that regard and the need for regional and international cooperation in the fight against Da'esh and its associated groups. Côte d'Ivoire is determined, for its part, to work with all bilateral and multilateral partners to eradicate that scourge.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire would like to pay tribute once again to the courage of the Iraqi security and defence forces, which defeated Da'esh in 2017, and congratulate the Iraqi authorities on the successful holding of parliamentary elections on 12 May, which resulted in the appointment of Mr. Barham Salih and Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi, President of the Republic and Prime Minister, respectively. In my country's view, those actions will enable Iraq to regain lasting peace and stability in order to contribute to spreading peace in the region and to better utilize its immense wealth.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like, at the outset, to congratulate the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to wish it every success. We also thank the People's Republic of China for the wise manner in which it presided over the Council last month.

My delegation would like to express its deepest condolences to the United States delegation in New York, the United States Administration and the American people on the passing away of former President George Herbert Walker Bush.

We also thank Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, for his valuable briefing. We commend his personal commitment to carry out his work with care and determination under difficult circumstances, as well as his tireless efforts to fulfil his mandate pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference according to the highest international standards.

We welcome the first report (see S/2018/1031) of the Special Adviser on collecting, preserving and storing evidence of crimes committed by terrorist group Da'esh, in order to promote accountability and justice. The international community is keen to provide assistance to the Republic of Iraq in the post-Da'esh phase and following the victories it achieved against Da'esh, as evidenced by the unified international efforts to adopt

an international resolution to condemn and document evidence of the crimes perpetrated by Da'esh in Iraq. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the United Kingdom and other co-sponsors, in cooperation with the Government of Iraq, in sponsoring the resolution. Those efforts bore fruit, as evidenced in the adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), which includes a request to collect evidence of all acts committed by the Da'esh terrorist organization in Iraq that amount to crimes against humanity, genocide or war crimes.

Paragraph 2 of the resolution called for establishing an international Investigative Team headed by a Special Adviser of the Secretary-General to carry out the functions of collecting, preserving and storing evidence of the crimes of Da'esh and submitting same to national Iraqi courts. That is in line with the content of the resolution, which reaffirms full respect for the for the sovereignty and legal and judicial jurisdiction of Iraq. My country hopes that the Investigative Team will achieve the desired results. We underscore that the Government of Iraq has taken the necessary actions and measures as swiftly as possible to facilitate the establishment of the International Investigative Team.

We call on the international community and the States Members of the United Nations to join efforts to confront and contain the phenomenon of international terrorism, which threatens international peace and security, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations on the need for international cooperation to combat threats to international peace and security. The working mechanism of the Investigative Team, pursuant to the resolution and the terms of reference, is based on full respect for Iraq's judicial jurisdiction, and the resolution has set out a number of approaches to achieve its objectives.

First, the Team shall collect, preserve and store evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq in order to submit them to national Iraqi courts. It shall ensure the broadest possible use of that evidence and enable investigations by the competent Iraqi authorities on crimes perpetrated by Da'esh. That evidence will eventually be used in fair and independent criminal proceedings conducted by the competent Iraqi courts. The competent Iraqi authorities should be the primary intended recipients of that evidence, as specified in the terms of reference, and any other use of that evidence shall be determined in agreement with the Government of Iraq, on a case-by-case basis.

In that regard, when it comes to the death penalty, my Government believes that it is premature to talk about that matter, especially as the Security Council decided to review the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Team after a period of two years. We reaffirm that Iraq will exercise its sovereign right, pursuant to article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. We reiterate what we said before the Council on 13 November (see S/PV.8396) with regard to judicial proceedings for terrorist crimes. They will be carried out in accordance with the law and we will take into consideration the right of the accused to defend and appeal at all stages of the proceedings.

Secondly, resolution 2379 (2017) also underlines that Member States on whose territory Da'esh has committed acts that may amount to war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity may ask the Investigative Team to collect evidence of such acts, but only with the approval of the Security Council. The Secretary-General may also establish separate terms of reference with regard to the work of the Team in that State.

Thirdly, the resolution reaffirms that the Investigative Team will ensure that Iraqi experts benefit from its expertise and will make every possible effort to share knowledge with and assist the Government of Iraq.

Fourthly, the Government of Iraq reaffirms the impartiality and independence of the Investigative Team pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017) and the terms of reference that constitute the framework within which the Team will operate, pursuant to the relevant provisions of international law and the best practices of the United Nations in that regard.

Fifthly, in order to ensure that the Government of Iraq will address the outcomes and results of the resolution in an optimal manner, we reaffirm the need for Member States and regional and international organizations to provide appropriate legal assistance and capacity-building in order to strengthen the courts and judicial system of Iraq, pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017).

Sixthly, Iraq calls on Member States and regional and international organizations to provide their full support to the Investigative Team — including financial support, services and equipment — in order to enable the Team to carry out its work. In that regard, we commend the contributions of the United Kingdom,

the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the State of Qatar, as well as the contribution announced today by the United States, to endow the Team trust fund. We call on Member States to support the Team so that it can carry out its mandate and achieve the political objective for which it was established.

In conclusion, we hope that the Investigative Team will work within the approaches and the terms of reference contained in the resolution, while fully respecting the sovereignty and judicial system of Iraq. We call once again on Member States to swiftly meet the financial requirements cited by the Head of the Team in his report to the Fifth Committee so that the Team can fulfil its mandate within the period established by the resolution. We wish the Head of the Team and its members every success.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8413

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8413th meeting

Wednesday, 5 December 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ouattara	(Côte d'Ivoire)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Angue
	Ethiopia	Mr. Amde
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Ms. Kaag
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability

Letter dated 28 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/1063)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. George Herbert Walker Bush, forty-first President of the United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Security Council, I wish to convey my heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America following the death of Mr. George Herbert Walker Bush, forty-first President of the United States. President Bush left us after a long and illustrious career in the service of his country, including as Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, where he presided over the Security Council in May 1972.

On behalf of the Council, I invite all attendees to stand and observe a minute of silence in memory of President Bush.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability

Letter dated 28 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/1063)

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, Ministers and other representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Burkina Faso, Japan, Rwanda and Senegal to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Paul Robert Tiendrebeogo, Minister for African Integration and Burkinabes Living Abroad of Burkina Faso.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/1063, which contains a letter dated 28 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and give him the floor.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency President Alassane Ouattara and at the same time thank Côte d'Ivoire for using its presidency of the Security Council to propose today's theme, which emphasizes the links between sustainable economic development, peace and security.

The experience of Côte d'Ivoire itself, which is moving forward on the path of peacebuilding and development, shows us that peace and development are indivisible. In addition, having hosted a United Nations peacekeeping operation on its soil, Côte d'Ivoire can make a valuable contribution and share its experience with ongoing peace operations in other countries around the world. These facts undoubtedly attest to the results we can achieve if we work together. This is the very spirit of my Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

In the long term and in the light of the acute and protracted crises that shake the world today, it is clear that the main method of responding to crises has too high a human and financial cost. That is why I am so keen to refocus our activities on prevention, to rebalance our action in the fields of peace and security, and to coordinate our activities across the three pillars of peace, sustainable development and human rights. Peace cannot be sustainable without development, and sustainable peace is essential for the preservation of development gains. Based on this observation, I would like to share four key messages with the Security Council today.

First, we must take a holistic approach. This approach essentially implies that we combat such potential factors of instability as inequalities, climate

change, competition for resources, corruption and cross-border crime. It also requires a real awareness that investing in basic services, sustainable development and social cohesion is investing in peace. Finally, it requires a better adaptation of the United Nations presence to the changing needs of countries that, in the aftermath of a violent conflict, seek to establish lasting peace. To this end, we must give priority to meeting the needs of the host country and mobilizing the entire United Nations system — all peace operations, all humanitarian and development actors — around these needs. This is one of the fundamental elements of the reforms I have undertaken. Unfortunately, all too often, countries that have experienced crises can sometimes return to violence if a development programme inclusive is not well conducted.

Secondly, we need to adopt more inclusive approaches. It is essential that peace and development activities be owned, led and carried out by national and local actors. For this to occur, we must mobilize citizens first and foremost, as well as the private sector, and ensure that the scope for civil society action remains intact. We must also involve in our efforts the social strata that are too often marginalized and excluded, such as women and girls, the elderly, young people, people with disabilities and members of minority groups. The participation of women, in particular, is a sure way to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding. Their contribution is indeed crucial to the economic recovery, political legitimacy and social cohesion.

(*spoke in English*)

Thirdly, we need more partnerships. I am committed to further strengthening ties with regional and subregional organizations and with international financial institutions to safeguard development gains, strengthen resilience and build local capacities to prevent and respond to conflicts. This is particularly important in transition settings, once the mission departs and international attention and resources typically start to decline.

Our partnership with the African Union is key and continues to deepen. We have signed joint frameworks on peace and security and on implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Further, we have conducted joint missions focused on women, demonstrating the central importance of gender equality. Earlier this year, I signed a Strategic Partnership Framework with the World Bank, and we are operationalizing the findings of our joint study, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*.

The Peacebuilding Commission has a useful convening and bridging role to play as a platform where diverse actors and stakeholders foster coherence among political objectives and support sustainable development in countries affected by conflict. Indeed, the Commission's dialogues with local peace activists and civil society have been essential in connecting country-level peacebuilding efforts with global policy discussions.

Fourthly, we need adequate and predictable resources for peacebuilding and development actors during the conflict cycle. We must support Member States in strengthening domestic resource mobilization and in attracting external investments.

The Peacebuilding Fund needs and deserves greater support. As a catalytic, fast and flexible vehicle, the Fund fosters local participation and, crucially, provides support in remote areas, including cross-border zones, that are often overlooked. The Fund has also allocated more than 30 per cent of its annual resources to supporting women's rights and gender equality for sustaining peace. I reiterate my call to all Member States and United Nations organizations to follow this example. I also appeal once again for African-led peace operations acting under the Security Council's authority to receive predictable, sustainable and flexible financing, including through United Nations-assessed contributions where appropriate.

I am strongly committed to supporting the Security Council as we strive together to strengthen our work across the peace continuum.

Restructuring and repositioning the peace and security and development pillars of the United Nations will help foster a new generation of approaches and architecture to more effectively respond to the world's most pressing problems. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustaining peace are complementary and mutually reinforcing. I encourage all actors to do more to embrace those frameworks as our best guarantees against instability and insecurity. I once again thank His Excellency President Ouattara and Côte d'Ivoire for focusing our attention on this crucial work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Faki Mahamat.

Mr. Faki Mahamat (*spoke in French*): The African Union echoes the President of the Security Council in conveying its condolences to the United States of America following the passing of former President George H.W. Bush, who, in the course of his long career, served as his country's representative here in the Security Council.

By choosing the topic of peacebuilding and sustaining peace, post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability, and by sharing with us today its post-conflict experience, Côte d'Ivoire has made a real contribution. Countries where recurrent conflicts persist, particularly in Africa, would do well to be inspired by that experience, which is enlightening at more than one level. I wish therefore to pay tribute to President Alassane Ouattara, whose presence heightens the importance of this meeting. I wish also to reiterate my appreciation to Secretary-General António Guterres for his commitment. Since taking office, he has been working continuously to strengthen partnerships, including with the African Union.

The quest for peace is a lengthy process requiring a continuing commitment on the part of national stakeholders and ongoing support from the international community. In the absence of international support, national efforts cannot overcome the countless obstacles that stand in the way of peace. In the absence of strong national political will, international assistance cannot lead to sustainable results.

Côte d'Ivoire is a clear demonstration of the fact that peace is within reach when the will to achieve it exists. As Africa redoubles its efforts to silence the guns by 2020, the path taken by Côte d'Ivoire is a source of encouragement, as are the recent developments in the Horn of Africa. I am pleased to note that the political will and determination that made it possible to end the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire have continued to be shown by the Ivorian authorities during the post-conflict phase.

At the political level, extending a hand to former enemies made it possible to take decisive steps on the path to reconciliation. The courageous measures announced by President Ouattara last August, on the fifty-eighth anniversary of his country's independence, are of landmark importance in that respect. On the economic front, the strong growth recorded in recent years, in parallel with an impressive level of infrastructure development, has brought Côte d'Ivoire closer to the desired emergence and laid considerable groundwork for its long-term stability.

In any conflict, silencing the guns is only the first step in a long process. Establishing lasting peace requires sustained efforts and a long-term commitment that extend well past the end of a peacekeeping mission's mandate. There can be no clearer illustration of the need to pay close attention to this question than the finding that 40 per cent of post-conflict countries relapse into violence 10 years after emerging from it.

That is why in 2006 the African Union adopted a framework document on post-conflict reconstruction and development to serve as a guide in efforts to address the root causes of conflict and prevent the resurgence of violence. It was followed by the launch in 2010 of the African Solidarity Initiative, which is based on the principle of mutual assistance on the continent. On the ground, the African Union is providing a tangible contribution to many Member States in post-conflict situations through quick-impact projects, technical support in key areas and advocacy aimed at mobilizing the required support. This practical involvement on the part of the African Union reflects the resolute will of African leaders to assume their share of responsibility in promoting peace and security on the continent. Self-reliance is an essential element of Africa's revitalization, and it is on the basis of that principle that our leaders have committed to financing 25 per cent of the costs of the continental agenda for peace and security.

In line with the relevant African Union instruments and based on past and current experiences on the continent, we cannot overemphasize the importance of political inclusion, democratic governance and a national leadership that is dedicated to the success of peacebuilding. It is equally important to promote balanced development, to fight resolutely against inequality and to meet the specific needs of young people and women, who are the primary victims of such conflicts.

The dialectic relation between peace and development is of course evident. Similarly, it is important to harmonize activities related to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process with security-sector reform and the fight against impunity in a way that takes account of the specifics of each situation.

The restoration of peace in Côte d'Ivoire is a victory for the partnership among the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire took over from the mission that ECOWAS had deployed on the ground since December 2002. Politically, the three organizations worked closely together throughout the peace process. The resolutions of the Council on Côte d'Ivoire were very often the outcome of decisions taken at the regional level, as signed off on by the African Union Peace and Security Council.

We are pleased to note that over the years, and learning from our common experience in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere on the continent, the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations has been significantly strengthened, both between the Commission and the Secretariat and between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council. I also take note of the promising cooperation that has developed between the Peace and Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. I reaffirm here the commitment of the African Union to continue and deepen that collaboration, with a particular focus not only on African countries that are on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, but also on those in which peacekeeping missions are preparing to wrap up their operations. In the context of strengthening our partnership, I believe it useful to recall the principles that should guide our common action in support of peace, stability and development on the continent.

First, there needs to be national ownership. In that area, as in many others, nothing sustainable can be achieved if national actors do not provide leadership of the peacebuilding process.

Secondly, solutions must be promoted that are adapted to the realities of each country; this applies in particular to the issue of post-conflict justice. In accordance with its Constitutive Act, the African Union is deeply committed to the fight against impunity. But the fight for justice must be conducted in a manner that promotes reconciliation and lasting peace on the basis of the triptych of justice, truth and reconciliation. Any other approach could perpetuate divisions and recreate conditions conducive to violence. It is therefore pertinent and timely to call for a fresh review of the principles underlying the concept of transitional justice.

Thirdly, long-term international support is required. Unfortunately, international mobilization often dwindles as soon as a crisis stops making headlines, even though that marks the start of the most critical part of the process of the sustainable promotion of peace.

I wish to conclude by stressing the timeliness of this debate on peacebuilding, and I hope that it will lead to increased mobilization on the part of the international community in this area, as it is necessary, in order to succeed, to judiciously combine the need for solidarity with the African continent with a long-term perspective.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Faki Mahamat for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

I am particularly honoured to preside over this high-level Council debate in the framework of the activities chosen by Côte d'Ivoire to distinguish its Security Council presidency during the month of December. This is an important moment for my country, coming 27 years after its last term on the Security Council. Our presidency also comes more than one year after the removal of Côte d'Ivoire from the Security Council's agenda and the closure, in 2017, of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) after 13 years of presence on our territory. It must be said that it was a genuine success story.

Côte d'Ivoire assumes the rotating presidency of the Security Council at a time marked by upheaval at the international level, with a reshaping of certain balances. Our presence in this prestigious forum offers us the opportunity to reiterate our faith in a balanced multilateral system that allows everyone to make their voice heard, howsoever weak it may be, and to see their aspirations taken into consideration. In this pivotal period, our world is called to show greater solidarity and understanding so as to overcome the peace and security challenges we all face. In that context, our presidency will be characterized by openness, the sharing of experiences and collaboration in order to create the conditions for consensus on the most difficult issues at all times. We also want to expand the range of Security Council responses to the various issues before it.

Moreover, during its presidency my country will pay close attention to African issues — and here I

thank Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat for his presence — which sadly and overwhelmingly dominate our agenda and require the special attention and full commitment of each of the African countries. I therefore invite Council members to respond favourably to Africa's expectations and calls for greater solidarity in financing its peace support operations, and I thank the Secretary-General for all his initiatives in this area.

In view of the many challenges to international peace and security in our ever-changing world, the United Nations and the Security Council are more indispensable than ever before in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. I would therefore like to express my encouragement to the Secretary-General for the ambitious reform of our shared Organization that he has initiated, the outcome of which will be an even more effective Organization.

As I said, Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed the unprecedented commitment of the international community, particularly the United Nations and the Security Council, for more than a decade. Indeed, in managing the crisis that my country endured, the Security Council adopted more than 50 resolutions. Some of those resolutions, in particular those relating to the certification of elections and the protection of civilians, constitute new and courageous developments that will remain engraved in the annals of the Council.

I can speak to the Council today thanks to the determination and efforts of the Ivorian people who elected me and to the remarkable commitment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union — whose high officials, Mr. Faki Mahamat and Mr. Jean-Claude Brou, I welcome here today — as well as of the United Nations, through UNOCI. I pay warm tribute to ECOWAS for the role it played in those initial moments of crisis recovery.

I express my gratitude to then-Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire at the time of the crisis, Mr. Choi Young-Jin, for their courage, their determination and their commitment to defending the ideals of peace of the United Nations.

On behalf of the Ivorian nation, I pay tribute to the memory of the 150 peacekeepers who sacrificed their lives to save others and to bring peace and stability to my country. I express the appreciation of the Ivorian people to their countries and their families, as well as to the great family of the United Nations.

I also pay tribute to a worthy son of Africa — the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations — for his outstanding contribution to peace in the world. That is Mr. Kofi Annan, the great humanist, who passed away on 18 August and whose voice and wisdom will be missed by the great causes of the world.

The theme of our debate — "Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability" — is of great importance to my country, given its recent history. That theme offers us the opportunity to share our experience in post-crisis reconstruction. It also gives us an opportunity to discuss the priorities we have set in order to render irreversible the peace, security and development that Côte d'Ivoire has enjoyed since the end of the post-election crisis. We hope that the lessons learned from our experience will contribute modestly to enriching the Council's peacebuilding practice, which has evolved in recent years. Our experience may also be useful to countries facing similar situations.

In 2011, Côte d'Ivoire emerged from a decade of crisis a post-election crisis. My country was weakened in economic, social, human and security terms. Insecurity was widespread. All economic indicators were in the red, and economic infrastructure and basic public services were in a state of worrying disrepair. That situation could have jeopardized the country's return to lasting peace and stability if urgent measures and a comprehensive strategy for reconstruction and development had not been implemented as soon as the clashes had come to an end. Recovery became possible thanks to the restoration of State authority, which we were able to secure in spite of our four and a half months of confinement in the Hotel du Gulf in Abidjan, the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire.

As has been demonstrated in several situations considered by the Council, post-crisis reconstruction, peace and stability depend heavily on the existence of State structures and institutions capable of fully performing their functions.

Since 2011, Côte d'Ivoire has based its strategy for post-crisis reconstruction, peace and stability on the restoration of its economy, on demobilization, disarmament and reintegration and on security-sector reform and reconciliation. We began working on all those issues while we were confined to the Hôtel du Golf for four and a half months. The fact that our economy

has bounced back so quickly has given the Government the necessary leverage not only to respond to the people's immediate social and security needs but also to work on the country's long-term development. That was what we had in mind when we were designing and implementing our presidential emergency programme during those sleepless nights in the Hôtel du Golf, with the aim of restoring basic social infrastructure, particularly in fragile rural areas, so as to accelerate the re-establishment of Government authority in every region of the country.

We backed up the emergency programme with national development plans for the periods from 2012 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020, at a total cost of approximately $72 billion, or almost CFAF40,000 billion, spread over those years, with major private-sector involvement. The goal was to have the private sector provide at least 60 per cent of the financing, because we firmly believe in its ability to revive the economy and create jobs. Those investments have enabled a massive transformation of the economy and brought a growth rate averaging almost 9 per cent a year between 2012 and 2017. In some years, in fact, the growth rate has actually reached 9 per cent, and today it is around 7.5 per cent.

With regard to peace and stability, and with the support of the United Nations and our financial and technical partners, we initiated and implemented a reform of the security sector and a vast and ambitious disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The programme cost $200 million, 72 per cent of which was funded by the State of Côte d'Ivoire, and has resulted in the reintegration of more than 65,000 ex-combatants. Beyond that process, which we managed to carry out in three years, the country's economic improvement has provided young people and ex-combatants with many employment opportunities. A country of 24 million inhabitants has created more than 2 million jobs since 2012. I am sure that the members of the Council themselves can see the importance of that job creation.

Besides that, we are continuing to restructure and modernize the army, the security services and the judiciary to make them more effective and professional. At this point, I would like to pay tribute to our security and defence forces for their commitment to serving the nation, their professionalism and their respect for human rights, in particular during the terrorist attack on Grand-Bassam in March 2016.

On the political front, the Government has taken almost complete charge of all the elections that have been held since 2012, including the 2015 presidential election and the 2016 referendum, which gave Côte d'Ivoire a modern Constitution that does a much better job of guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of our citizens, especially women. All the elections have helped to consolidate democracy and the normalization of national political life in Côte d'Ivoire. Incidentally, we have just concluded a second round of local elections. The Government has also worked to strengthen good governance through the establishment of a high authority for good governance whose mission is preventing and combating corruption. We have also funded compensation for victims of the successive crises we endured, through a process that began in 2015 with the establishment of a special fund with an initial allocation of CFAF10 billion.

Finally, we have launched several initiatives to promote and strengthen national reconciliation and social cohesion, including the establishment of structures such as a dialogue, truth and reconciliation commission, a national commission for reconciliation and the compensation of victims, and a Chamber of Kings and Traditional Chiefs, based on their role in settling conflicts and mediating at the local level. In August, acting on my desire to strengthen reconciliation and definitively settle the dispute relating to the 2010 post-electoral crisis, I introduced an amnesty law, aimed at the 800 or so individuals who had been prosecuted or convicted of offences related to the post-electoral crisis or to offences against State security. These initiatives have had significant results. Today all internally displaced persons have returned to their places of origin and virtually all Ivorian refugees have returned to Côte d'Ivoire. We live together in peace and tolerance.

The case of Côte d'Ivoire should encourage the Council and the international community to take action when considering other post-crisis situations, however complex they may be. First and foremost — and here I completely agree with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission — post-conflict reconstruction, peace and lasting stability require a Government that derives its legitimacy from democratic and transparent elections. After that, what we found essential was the establishment and redeployment of a reliable and trustworthy Administration. Thirdly, what is needed is a credible reconciliation process and security-

sector reform designed to create a professional army and security services. And the last requirement is an emergency investment plan both for providing basic social services and, of course, creating jobs, especially for young people. That process requires sustained political and technical support and significant financial resources, which post-conflict countries do not have. That is why it is important to ensure that the international community, and the United Nations in particular, remains decisively and resolutely engaged in such countries while evaluating the conditions it needs for an orderly withdrawal, as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire.

However, we must recognize that peace, stability and development in a country emerging from crisis are also dependent on the regional security environment, as with my country in West Africa. When we see the situation in West Africa in general and in the Sahel, where there is intense terrorist activity in some regions, we must address those threats together as resolutely as possible. In that regard, I call on the Council to provide adequate and sustainable funding for peacekeeping operations in Africa, especially that of the Group of Five for the Sahel, an area that continues to be of major concern for Côte d'Ivoire and all the countries in the West African subregion.

In conclusion, I want to once again express my sincere hope that I will see my country's experience enrich the recommendations and decisions on States engaged in the complex processes involved in emerging from crisis and rebuilding post-conflict. Côte d'Ivoire is determined to spare no effort in providing help to that end, and that is why we will provide the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and any other theatre of operations in Africa that may need our help with contingents that we have trained and equipped.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I invite His Excellency Mr. Simeon Oyono Esono Angue, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, to take the floor.

Mr. Esono Angue (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to convey the apologies of His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, to the Security Council, as despite his desire to be here he was unable to participate in today's important meeting, owing to previous State-related obligations. He has instructed me to convey to the Security Council his greetings of peace as well as his hopes for the meeting's success.

We also want to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of December and on convening today's meeting to discuss a very important issue with regard to peace and security in the world — that of post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability. We have every confidence in your ability to carry out this important work. We also commend and express our gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres and his entire team for their excellent and comprehensive briefing, which once again reflects the commitment of the United Nations to achieving peace, security and stability throughout the world. And we welcome His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat to the meeting.

In recent times the African continent has been one of the world's main victims of armed conflicts. It continues to be so, and it knows better than anyone its devastating consequences, in the form of political instability, poverty, human rights violations, damage to infrastructure and weakened institutions. Many African countries emerging from conflicts and wars have to face multiple challenges in the areas of the economy, infrastructure, reconstruction, poverty elimination, employment, education, public health and social security. In such situations, the international community should focus its efforts on providing genuine assistance to the countries affected with the goal of enabling them to achieve an economic recovery that prioritizes industrialization, the modernization of agriculture and the development of human rights, and in which the establishment of education programmes takes precedence. Education is an essential component in every country's search for economic emergence. It is also important to recognize that peacebuilding is a long-term, complex and difficult endeavour that in today's environment is encountering many new obstacles and challenges, and that demands serious consideration aimed at eliciting an appropriate response on the part of the international community.

We have said before that no conflict can be settled easily and that peace can never be achievable or sustainable without the kind of measures that promote

inclusive and balanced development for the benefit of all. The effort expended to resolve a given conflict must continue at the same level if development is to be achieved once the conflict has ended. That must be the absolute priority and inalterable policy goal in seeking definitive solutions to the world's problems. There can be no peace without justice, and in order to consolidate peace processes and resolve conflicts, it is important that victims feel that justice has been done, since policies that permit impunity can engender vengefulness and hatred. That is why it is important to properly manage the relationship between maintaining peace and seeking justice. Humankind has always longed for the goals of peace and justice, two concepts that complement and mutually reinforce one another. Achieving justice is not simply a legal problem. It is closely linked to other political, economic and cultural factors. The ultimate goal of justice is stability and reconciliation, which are indispensable concepts in the quest for peace and stability, especially in post-conflict environments. That process must include the rehabilitation of our most vulnerable citizens, who are women and children.

It is crucial to help countries emerging from conflict to design comprehensive strategies for reconstruction and sustainable development, tailored to the specific circumstances of their individual situations. There is no one-size-fits-all model for peacebuilding. In providing assistance, the international community must respect the particular idiosyncrasies of every country, and their specific points of view must be taken into account, as they have the greatest interest in their own stability and reconstruction. The international community must take that into consideration.

Sustainable socioeconomic development should be the principal route to building peace and should also be its ultimate goal. Other important aspects, such as human rights or the rule of law, must not be unnecessarily prioritized to the detriment of economic and social development. The United Nations system should play a coordinating role so as to promote the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and give priority to ending poverty and hunger.

We call on the international community to focus more intently on the socioeconomic development of States in post-conflict situations. The security situation in several West African countries has stabilized in recent years and is returning to normal. Equatorial Guinea welcomes those success stories and is confident that under the impetus of the Governments and peoples of the region, they will achieve even greater success on the road to rebuilding and developing the region. The positive experiences of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone deserve recognition, as they represent tangible practical examples of lessons learned and good practices. Countries in other African regions are embarking on similar processes. We are hopeful for their success and call on the stakeholders involved in the various conflicts to put the overall interests of their nations first and do their best to achieve stability and peace for their countries. The consolidation and success of those processes involve multisectoral actions, including the reform of armed forces, the promotion of justice, realistic economic programmes, successful political leadership and frank and inclusive dialogue, among other things.

The desire for peace, stability and development is a common goal and shared aspiration of the States Members of the United Nations, especially on the African continent, where wars and conflicts persist. The need to put an end to those conflicts as quickly as possible in order to create a secure environment for socioeconomic development has become the main priority of the international community, thereby requiring the significant support and assistance of the United Nations. The primary responsibility of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security is both irrefutable and irreplaceable. In that regard, cooperation with the African Union and regional economic communities is essential to achieving satisfactory results.

Equatorial Guinea is actively participating in the intense round of negotiations under way towards adopting — if possible this month and under Côte d'Ivoire's presidency of the Council — a draft resolution aimed at providing predictable and sustainable funding through United Nations contributions to African Union peacekeeping and peace support operations. I wish to reiterate in this forum the request for the support of all here present to help make the aspirations of the African continent a reality.

The equation is simple and clear: we Africans understand our own environment, which is where many of the conflicts taking place are bleeding us and destabilizing international peace and security, obstructing not only our full development but also preventing us from harnessing our undeniable potential.

Our partners, on the other hand, have the means that could generate the necessary impetus to efforts seeking to bring peace and stability to our continent. That model of pioneering cooperation promises success and has every chance of being successful, and we should not waste this opportunity. Any endeavour to that end is fully justified.

We also encourage Member States to ensure the full participation of women and young people in peacebuilding processes. It is widely recognized that the participation of women is crucial to the success of economic recovery, political legitimacy and social cohesion. National and international actors must recognize the potential of young people as agents of positive change. In order to achieve that, educational systems must be rebuilt and young people must participate and have a voice in the rebuilding of their societies.

To conclude, we would like to remind Member States that, while partnerships and other forms of support, such as funding, are of the utmost importance in post-conflict reconstruction, one of the preconditions for successful foreign assistance is that those that provide it should resist the temptation to impose their preferred solutions upon the receiving country. It is essential that the countries receiving support determine their own goals and priorities and establish policies that are most likely to realize them. A successful strategy can therefore be developed and implemented only through realistic and active cooperation between donors and recipient countries. It is imperative that donors and partners do not impose upon host countries the nature, timing and sequence of economic policies, each of which could result in unacceptable social costs and the risk of conflict. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its continued support for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations in general.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would ask that the representative of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea convey my gratitude to President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo for having appointed him as the representative of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Ms. Kaag (Netherlands): The Kingdom of the Netherlands reiterates its condolences on the death of former President of the United States of America George Herbert Walker Bush.

(*spoke in French*):

At the outset, allow me to thank the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Alassane Ouattara, for having convened this important debate.

(*spoke in English*)

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for their contributions to today's debate.

As we have heard, Côte d'Ivoire is an excellent example of a country that is no longer on the Security Council's agenda, but instead represents a valued member of the Council. In bringing its experience to the table, Côte d'Ivoire provides valuable support to other countries and the Council, as highlighted in the examples given by the country's President. Like Côte d'Ivoire, the Kingdom of the Netherlands believes that it is essential for the Security Council to focus more sharply on equitable post-conflict social and economic development, reconstruction and reconciliation, as part of the broader international peace and security agenda.

The Council was created to improve the lives of people — to provide men, women and children with an opportunity to live their lives in peace and security and to enjoy sustainable development. And peace and security are so much more than the absence of armed conflict. When we ignore that fact, we see war-torn societies reaching fragile peace deals, only to fall back into armed conflict when international attention drifts away. And, as members of the Security Council and the international community, we find ourselves discussing missions, mandates and budgets to fix things that should not have been broken in the first place.

It is in all of our interests to realize that sustainable peace and conflict prevention require an integrated approach, one that is sustainable and includes social and economic development from the outset — that is essential. But let me underline that the Kingdom of the Netherlands believes that the most successful form of prevention is to make sure that there is no need for the Council to address a particular country situation. That requires the collective effort of States, the entire United Nations system and international institutions, be they financial or social, to tackle the root causes and prevent instability from going down the line.

Conflict prevention is the cornerstone of the integrated foreign policy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and it has been a priority during our tenure on the Council. We have invested in timely risk analysis on climate change, as well as the failure and impact of the failure to respect human rights, which is needed to help not only prevent conflicts from starting or emerging but also to ensure a sustainable transition from conflict to peacebuilding and durable peace. The Joint United Nations-World Bank study entitled *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, highlights the importance of addressing inequalities and exclusion in ensuring sustainable peace. I would like to add environmental sustainability to that list. Three points are crucial in that respect.

First of all, environmental sustainability is no longer optional within the menu of economic development. Over the past year, the Security Council has seen, in many countries, that climate change, food insecurity and water stress increase tensions, which ultimately may lead to conflict. Therefore, efforts to build up the economy after conflict must take those challenges into account to ensure resilience, energy transformation and innovative approaches to achieve those goals. That is particularly relevant when it comes to food security, which needs no further elaboration. This year, all countries around the table have shown the courage and political will to recognize that fact through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2417 (2018), on conflict and hunger. In that regard, I commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for taking up its mandated task earlier this year with respect to Yemen and South Sudan, the latter a country that turned seven years old this year and is home to 7 million people at risk of severe food shortages.

But there is also more that we can do as an international community if we want to more systematically respond to food insecurity and the risk of famine. We need to safeguard agriculture-based livelihoods and secure the means to produce food — even or especially — during conflict. That requires innovative partnerships that also include the private sector and, of course, financial institutions.

A second point we would like to address is inequality. Economic development must provide opportunities for all. Women and girls can and will be powerful agents of socioeconomic change, but we must provide them with equal opportunities, especially access to education, inclusive financing and land rights. As for children, the great challenge is to equip all children in developing countries — but particularly those in conflict or under threat of conflict — with the skill sets they need, no matter the group they belong to or the region they come from.

An instrument that is often forgotten but very helpful in reducing inequality in post-conflict societies is the provision of psychosocial support to all those who have suffered trauma as a result of conflict. The Netherlands is proud to announce that it will host a conference on that particular theme in the latter half of 2019, drawing attention to the importance of psychosocial support and the political will to back it, as well as the financial means and capacity to provide assistance to those who need it the most and are the most vulnerable.

Finally, following the principle of leaving no one behind, in order to ensure that everyone can participate and no one is truly excluded, societies need to develop strong and inclusive institutions, strengthen the rule of law and demonstrate respect for human rights for all.

Access to justice is also the focus of the ministerial meeting which will be held in The Hague on 6 and 7 February 2019. It is part of the third Justice Task Force Conference, which the Netherlands co-chairs with Sierra Leone, Argentina and the Elders.

The rule of law and strong, inclusive institutions are good for business and for attracting and retaining investments. It is what makes it possible for a country to make the transition from an economy of war to an economy of peace. Respect for human rights is instrumental in all of that. We have seen time and time again that disregard for human rights leads to conflict. That is why we believe the Security Council should request timely briefings about human rights situations of concern. And it is why we supported human rights briefings on Syria, North Korea and Iran.

I would like to conclude by stating that the Kingdom of the Netherlands stands with Côte d'Ivoire, and indeed with Secretary-General Guterres, in its quest to reform the United Nations system. It is our quest to promote and ensure the implementation of an integrated approach by all of us and the system, along with the three outlined pillars. We have the tools to embark upon that task — the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions. They are the ultimate prevention

agenda. Together, it is incumbent upon us to promote a proactive United Nations system that acts to prevent conflict in a timely manner through improved risk analysis and early warning, one that acts to resolve conflict, including through better peacekeeping. We need a United Nations system that acts to sustain peace by ensuring that root causes are properly addressed in all strategies and mandates and by treating the wounds of conflict through transitional justice and accountability for the perpetrators of human rights abuses or through support for those who have suffered the most.

Those will always be the priorities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere and personal commitment to pursue those goals long after our Security Council membership. We will not stop. We will remain strong and steadfast, as always, as a partner in peace, security and justice.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would ask that the Dutch representative convey our gratitude to Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands for our debates and for having appointed her to represent the Netherlands.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to begin by conveying our condolences on the passing away of former President George Herbert Walker Bush. We express our sympathy to his entire family. President Bush was an old friend of the Chinese people. Over the years, he witnessed and promoted the historical development of Sino-American relations and made positive contributions to the friendly relations between our two peoples.

I welcome you, Mr. President, to New York to preside over today's debate. I thank Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Secretary-General António Guterres for their briefings.

China commends Côte d'Ivoire for setting the theme of today's debate — Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability". Maintaining peace, building peace and achieving lasting peace are important responsibilities of the Security Council. Post-conflict countries are now confronted with the pressing task of economic development. Only when people's basic needs are met and their livelihoods guaranteed can peace be consolidated and a relapse into conflict avoided.

The concept note prepared by the presidency of Côte d'Ivoire (S/2018/1063, annex) is highly illuminating. As for the role that the Council should play in this process, I would like to make the following three observations.

First, it is important to respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international relations. We must respect the national sovereignty and ownership of the countries concerned, while helping them to craft a development path tailored to its national specificities. Priority should be given to capacity-building, helping countries achieve early transitions and self-driven development.

Secondly, equal emphasis should be given to development and security, and both the symptoms and root causes of conflicts should be addressed. Poverty and underdevelopment are the major sources of conflict. The international community should comprehensively advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, strengthen global partnerships for development and honour aid commitments in order to promote sustainable peace through sustainable development. Due attention should be given to building institutions, enhancing social cohesion and progressively allocating more resources to development areas.

Thirdly, we must enhance the role of the United Nations in post-conflict reconstruction. United Nations field offices should uphold their respective mandates. Those in development areas should focus on fulfilling their development mandates and attach importance to strengthening cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. The international community should actively support African countries in implementing the African Peace and Security Architecture Road Map (2016-2020) and the African Union's Agenda 2063, and encourage regional organizations to play an active role in the reconstruction of post-conflict countries in the region.

The poor are usually among the most affected and most vulnerable in the context of conflicts. Accelerating poverty alleviation and achieving development are urgently needed for consolidating the post-conflict peace dividend. As the most populous developing country, China is deeply aware of the link between development and people's well-being. It is our abiding commitment to share development opportunities and results with other countries around the world. We

have actively assisted developing countries, including those in post-conflict situations, through South-South cooperation.

The Beijing Summit of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation was successfully held in September. We were very pleased to see President Ouattara, Chairman Faki Mahamat and Secretary-General Guterres there. At the Summit it was decided that China and Africa would focus on eight major initiatives in the next three years — industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, green development, capacity-building, health care, people-to-people exchanges and peace and security — in the form of Government assistance, as well as investment and financing by financial institutions and companies. A total of $60 billion in financing will be provided to African countries. President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, an international public good offered by China, has become the world's single largest platform for international cooperation.

We welcome the participation in the Initiative of all parties and countries. We are pleased to see the remarkable achievements that Côte d'Ivoire has made with regard to its post-conflict reconstruction. In recent years, its economy has maintained an annual growth rate of over 8 per cent. China has been actively engaged in the reconstruction process in Côte d'Ivoire and has provided support and assistance to the best of its abilities. Chinese peacekeepers participated in the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. The projects in that country that have been completed with Chinese aid, such as the farmland and water-conservancy projects and the construction of rural schools, continue to have a positive impact. The Soubre hydropower plant, financed by China, became operational in December 2017. It is the largest hydropower station in West Africa and has generated thousands of job opportunities for the local community. China will continue to take concrete actions to support Côte d'Ivoire and other African countries in their reconstruction and development endeavours.

Before I conclude, I would like to recall that the first President of Côte d'Ivoire, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, once said that the dream of humankind should go beyond simply having a home to live in or a piece of bread to fill one's stomach. He said that Africa should strive to realize the dream of building a greater human family. Alongside other countries, including African countries, China stands ready to contribute to achieving lasting peace and common prosperity in post-conflict countries and to play a strong role in building a community with a shared future for humankind.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): Today the American people mourn the loss of President George H. W. Bush, the forty-first President of the United States of America. We thank the Security Council and the many delegations and colleagues who have offered their condolences since his passing. Allow me now to make a short statement in his memory.

President Bush exemplified a fearless sense of duty to his nation through his lifelong commitment to public service. On his eighteenth birthday, he enlisted in the United States Navy to serve his nation. From his time as a member of Congress, United States Ambassador to China, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and as President of the United States, he guided our nation to peace and prosperity. He also shaped a freer, safer world, including with the United Nations, as Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Envoy for the South Asia Earthquake Disaster and in this very Council as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Here, he worked selflessly to defend justice and promote peace.

On a personal note, I had the honour and privilege to work for President Bush. He was the first sitting President of my country whom I met personally. I met him for the first time in New York 27 years ago, in 1991, during the high-level week of the General Assembly. He made an indelible impression as a man of great decency and great dignity. He also left a legacy of towering foreign-policy achievements. We honour the legacy of President Bush. His unwavering commitment to public service and his accomplishments in both war and peace will continue to inspire generations to come.

I would like to thank the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Alassane Ouattara, for having gathered us today to identify concrete ways in which the Security Council can support peacebuilding and sustaining peace around the world. This meeting provides an opportunity to identify best practices in peacebuilding. It also allows us to reflect on peacekeeping missions that still have a long road to travel before peace is restored. It is our hope that we will leave today with a renewed collective commitment to working with the United Nations peacebuilding community to support each country seeking to transition to a post-conflict environment.

The Council spends much of its time addressing conflicts marked by open fighting, active violence and significant loss of life. But once the hard work of achieving a ceasefire has taken hold, such conflicts often fade from the front pages and from the Council's agenda. It is precisely at that moment when the quieter and arguably harder work begins to heal a society torn apart by conflict. While that work has historically been the responsibility of national Governments or non-governmental organizations, the United Nations has recently scaled up its capacity to play a leading role in peacebuilding. The Secretary-General's move to integrate the Peacebuilding Support Office into the Department of Political Affairs was a signal that the United Nations is seeking to break down institutional silos and marshal the full expertise of the United Nations system to complete that task.

The recent report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43) lays out a number of important recommendations including the development of integrated strategic frameworks, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and greater United Nations cooperation on the ground. While some progress has been made, we encourage the United Nations to push forward on the full range of proposals. Some of those proposals may require new resources. We encourage countries to provide additional voluntary contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund, but we do not support efforts to tie a percentage of the peacekeeping budget to the Fund. On the whole, greater coordination and communication across the United Nations peacebuilding system should not require additional financial outlays.

We face a collective challenge in our approach to peacebuilding. Our statements today will all support the peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations. However, we may all have different, undefined visions of what that work should encompass in each context. To remedy that, we encourage the United Nations, in each specific instance, to identify a vision for an achievable end-state and align resources and stakeholders to get there. Optimally, the United Nations would identify that desired end-state at the start of a peacekeeping mission and pair it with an achievable exit strategy. In that scenario, once the mission had fulfilled its mandate, United Nations efforts would transition to peacebuilding support. Côte d'Ivoire and Colombia are two models of United Nations peacebuilding that have benefited from a clear vision of a more peaceful future.

In June 2017, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) closed its doors after having successfully provided support to the peace agreement of 2003 and having helped to address the 2010 political unrest. We made the right call as the Council to terminate a mission whose objective to stabilize a post-conflict country had largely been accomplished. Côte d'Ivoire also recognized that the closure of UNOCI meant not that its task had been completed, but that the hard work of peacebuilding was just beginning. The Peacebuilding Commission has been actively engaged across the country, from standardizing identification documents and formalizing citizenship rights, to organizing election-focused civil-society dialogues. The strong coordination among the Security Council, the United Nations peacebuilding community, the Government and local citizens has enabled Côte d'Ivoire to overcome conflict and restore peace. President Ouattara, we recognize the difficult task that you faced, as well as your critical leadership in building a more peaceful society.

With regard to Colombia, the Council approved a narrow and specific mandate for a United Nations special political mission tasked with the monitoring and verification of the ceasefire between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the Government of Colombia. As a result, the FARC-EP relinquished thousands of weapons and explosives, became a political party and participated in recent elections. The successor mission, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, now monitors security guarantees and the reintegration of FARC-EP members into Colombian society. Colombians in the Mission are now working towards the full implementation of a comprehensive peace plan. They are embracing a collaborative, inclusive approach that is already delivering dividends for peace.

In our support for post-conflict reconstruction efforts, the United States has identified several common best practices. First, the international community should treat a peace deal or a ceasefire as only the first step in a long process. Secondly, post-conflict reconciliation takes time and cannot be rushed. Thirdly, local actors in societies as a whole must buy into the transition. President Ouattara, you worked with those goals in mind as you supported your country's transition. The Peacebuilding Commission understands those dynamics and is well positioned to support that critical work elsewhere.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, I would like to thank and congratulate your country for having convened this important meeting. Your presence today among us is a testament to the importance that Côte d'Ivoire attaches to peacebuilding.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

We also welcome the presence of Secretary-General António Guterres. We thank him and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat for their briefings.

In 1992, the term "peacebuilding" appeared for the first time in Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report "An Agenda for Peace" (S/24111), which defined it in its paragraph 21 as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict", with the goal of overcoming the devastating effects of war and armed conflict and building peace processes. That launched one of most important and pivotal undertakings of our Organization, one aimed at strengthening post-conflict States. Peacebuilding is indeed a key tool, in the framework of ownership and accountability on the part of Member States, for addressing, in an appropriate manner, challenges pertaining to the restoration of State order, the rehabilitation of administrative structures, the restoration of domestic security and the rule of law, and, of course, development.

On the other hand, to fully build peace, it is necessary to address the root and structural causes of conflict. It is also pivotal to foster a common understanding of the factors that trigger conflict, sharing information garnered from early-warning mechanisms regarding potential conflict, devising conflict-prevention mechanisms, coordinating joint actions and ensuring mutual support throughout the various stages of conflict response and management.

As we have stated on several occasions, cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is key. The relevance of such cooperation is reflected in the work of the African Union, through the Peace and Security Council and subregional organizations, as their efforts have made possible significant progress in conflict prevention, which is facilitated when such bodies share with the United Nations their views on the situation and in so doing promote a better understanding of a crisis and a unified approach to its settlement.

We believe that the process of the institutionalization of such cooperation should continue in order to ensure fluid communication that allows for direct consultations, better coordination of early-warning mechanisms, conflict analysis and common strategies developed on the basis of comparative advantages.

Peacebuilding is closely tied to the important links between good practices, lessons learned and the strengthening of interactive dialogue and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. We are in full agreement with the strategic plan devised by the Peacebuilding Support Office, which is aimed at ensuring that complementarity among peace and security initiatives, national ownership and gender and youth inclusivity, at all levels, form vital building blocks in the elaboration of a strategic partnership in the quest for effectiveness and flexibility, with a view to bringing about lasting peace.

In our view, our Organization and the international community as a whole has learned an important lesson: that of Côte d'Ivoire. In that country it has been demonstrated that peacekeeping operations can achieve their goals in a context where the host Government is a reliable partner that is deeply committed to upholding its responsibility towards the citizens whom it serves and to whom it has a duty — making it clear, of course, that peacekeeping operations cannot substitute for national political will or national efforts to overcome the problems that triggered the conflict.

We would underscore the fact that in recent years Côte d'Ivoire has made tangible progress on all fronts owing in large part to the efforts of its citizens, with the support of the United Nations and other partners. The political climate has stabilized following three peaceful electoral processes, allowing for economic growth and for all citizens to share in the dividends of peace, and strengthening the processes of security-sector reform and of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into civil society. We also underscore the importance of ongoing efforts to promote reconciliation and social cohesion, so as to enhance citizens' perception of the security forces deployed in their communities, which is a crucial element at the post-conflict stage.

We agree that there can be no development without peace or peace without development. We therefore believe that it is vital that the international community

as a whole pool and redouble its efforts to bolster synergies between peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities when necessary, in the framework of the relevant remits, in order to achieve our fundamental goal of the maintenance of lasting peace in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To conclude, we would stress that lasting peace should be sustained through the use of political tools in order to reach negotiated solutions. We strongly urge that efforts to achieve peace be made by means of multilateral mechanisms, in strict accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to begin by conveying our condolences to the people and the Government of the United States on the sad passing of former President George H.W. Bush. We wish to honour his memory and legacy.

We welcome the convening of this debate and the important briefing delivered by Secretary-General António Guterres. We wish also to welcome your presence, Mr. Ouattara, and to thank you for your important message. We are also grateful for the presence of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and of other high-level officials.

Peru agrees with other speakers that have underscored the importance of sustained, inclusive economic growth and post-conflict reconstruction to building and sustaining peace. We would in particular underscore the good practices of Côte d'Ivoire. Achieving lasting peace requires broad national consensus around the issue of the reconstruction of affected areas as well as economic revitalization. Opportunities should be created and tangible benefits ensured for the population, in a spirit of equity and transparency, promoting the return of displaced persons and ensuring that priority attention is accorded victims. It is therefore necessary to consolidate inclusive and accountable institutions that are capable of reducing inequality and ensuring access to justice and the rule of law, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The international community must support efforts to achieve these goals, on the understanding that there can be no development without peace or peace without sustainable development. In that connection, we would underscore the important role of the United Nations, particularly its Peacebuilding Commission.

In that context, we would stress three points.

First, we would underline the need to foster social cohesion and political consensus. Rebuilding a conflict-affected country must have as a foundation the reweaving of its social fabric. There can be no lasting peace if we do not at the same time make progress in the area of national reconciliation, guaranteeing access to justice and promoting human rights. It is therefore vital to foster the emergence of new political stakeholders that are committed to rebuilding a shared future. The participation of women and young people in this process is key.

Our second point is that we must make transparent investments in inclusive and resilient infrastructure. Post-conflict reconstruction requires major investments in infrastructure, which creates jobs and relaunches the economy. However, in order to attract the necessary investments and safeguard the legitimacy of the national institutions charged with promoting them, preserving the rule of law is crucial. Citizens must be able to see that infrastructure is being rebuilt with transparency, without corruption or discrimination, for the benefit of all sectors of society. Moreover, given the increasing frequency of natural disasters related to climate change, it is vital to ensure that any new infrastructure is resilient, in keeping with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

My third point is the responsibility of the international community. The proliferation of conflicts in today's world is linked to growing inequality within and among countries, as well as to vulnerability to global phenomena such as climate change, violent extremism and transnational organized crime. Modern conflicts are also characterized by their cross-border impact. Refugee crises have serious political consequences for many countries. Fluctuations in natural-resource prices affect all economies. In an irreversibly interdependent world, it is vital to bolster multilateralism and international cooperation and develop partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society in order to effectively respond to the challenges that we all face.

In that light, and to conclude, we wish to emphasize that supporting the reconstruction of conflict-affected countries and in general promoting sustainable development is not only an end in itself but also an effective and efficient means of preventing conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome you, Mr. President, to the Security Council.

First and foremost, I would like to echo the words of condolence that my colleagues have expressed to the American people and to the family and friends of the forty-first President of the United States of America, the late Mr. George Herbert Walker Bush. He served his country faithfully, first on the field of battle during the war years and then in high governmental positions. Mr. Bush did much to strengthen Russian-American cooperation on matters of international security and earned sincere respect in my country.

We thank you, Sir, for organizing today's Security Council meeting on post-conflict peacebuilding, and we are grateful to the Secretary-General for his views and for his serious attention to peacebuilding issues.

For many years United Nations peacebuilding assistance has been an important tool for helping States to deal with the consequences of conflicts. As a rule, countries that have survived the hot phase of a crisis do not have the human and institutional resources to resolve the whole complex of problems facing them on the security, law-and-order and socioeconomic development fronts, as well as other pressing issues, which is why they may need international assistance. At that sensitive stage, the main tasks for a country are establishing national reconciliation and restoring safe living conditions for its population as a whole, as crucial conditions for preventing relapses into armed conflict and transitioning to sustainable development.

Many issues related to the early stages of peacebuilding are included in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations. In fulfilling their main task of helping to advance peace processes, peacekeepers make an important contribution to establishing the initial conditions for the start of a full-fledged recovery. However, it should be understood that peacebuilding's key efforts take place at the national level. Those efforts do not consist in a short list of objectives but in a long process that begins before the drawdown of a United Nations mission and continues afterwards right up until all the goals have been successfully implemented. In that way it differs from international peacebuilding assistance, which is necessary only until the host State achieves self-sufficiency — that is, the ability to exist without critical support from the international community.

As we have seen in practice, the help that is provided during a conflict is not always effective, since it is often impossible to consolidate its positive results and the processes have to be started again from scratch in the event of a relapse into conflict. International peacebuilding assistance therefore gets results only when it is accompanied by a sustainable truce and a political process.

While the primary responsibility for developing and implementing peacebuilding strategies unquestionably belongs to Governments, all national stakeholders should recognize their shared responsibility for peace. It is difficult to conceive of effective post-conflict recovery, let alone development, without constructive contributions from all segments of society.

As for international support, it should be based on the Security Council's fundamental resolutions 1645 (2005) and 2282 (2016), which outline the basic principles of peacebuilding — the consent of host States, respect for its sovereignty and political independence, and the recognition of national ownership and leadership. Needless to say, international peacebuilding assistance should aim to enhance host States' national capacity and independence, not act as a substitute for their functions.

With regard to the work of the United Nations in the area of peacebuilding, it is important to strengthen its internal coordination and maintain its division of labour in accordance with the existing mandates of the various Secretariat departments. In developing peacebuilding assistance programmes, it is important to bear in mind that each country's situation is unique and each has its own reasons for where it has ended up. A one-size-fits-all approach simply will not work. Every option for international peacebuilding assistance must have the unconditional support of the host State or risk exacerbating existing problems.

The key role in coordinating peacebuilding assistance belongs to the Peacebuilding Commission. That intergovernmental advisory body's potential has still not been fully realized. It would be particularly helpful to the Security Council to have information about the national peacebuilding priorities of States whose situations are on both bodies' agendas. The transmission of that information and the Commission's unanimous advice could be an excellent complement to the Secretary-General's reports without duplicating them. That would be especially helpful during the transition from the peacekeeping to the peacebuilding

stage, or when the Council reviews missions with a view to increasing their cost effectiveness. Needless to say, where financing United Nations peacebuilding assistance is concerned, an increase in predictability would not go amiss. We believe that the best way to encourage Member States to make voluntary contributions is by ensuring proper transparency and accountability in the use of the funds provided.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that we firmly believe that only an impartial and transparent approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace can ensure the effectiveness of efforts in this area. It is important to provide that assistance in support of the efforts of host States themselves without imposing ready-made solutions or unnecessary mentoring. The main purpose of peacebuilding is to help States get back on their feet as soon as possible and manage their sustainable development issues independently.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to convey our deepest condolences following the death of Mr. George Herbert Walker Bush, forty-first President of the United States of America, a great patriot and a humble servant of his nation and also a faithful friend of Poland. Our sympathies go especially to his friends and family.

(*spoke in French*)

I would now like to thank the Secretary-General, as well as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for their very informative briefings. I would also like to congratulate Côte d'Ivoire on its assumption of the Council presidency for the month of December and to wish you every success, Mr. President, as well as to commend the Chinese delegation for its work during the month of November.

(*spoke in English*)

For more than 70 years, since the founding of the United Nations, building sustainable peace has been the holy grail of the international community. We have worked very hard to find it and to fulfil the dreams of so many, but so far to no avail. There have always been new challenges and obstacles, such as conflicts and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In order to tackle them, we should deploy a broad spectrum of activities within the competencies of all the Organization's three pillars of peace and security, development and human rights, which are all interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We cannot ensure long-term peace and security without addressing development and human rights. When they are connected, they are stronger and more effective, and that is why I would like to focus on those issues.

First, with regard to the peace and security pillar, peacebuilding and sustainable peace are a fundamental condition for development. To that end, the United Nations should comprehensively address conflicts by using every available instrument, from prevention through peace settlement and peacekeeping to comprehensive post-conflict restoration.

We should all underline the importance of sustaining peace through multidimensional peacekeeping operations, so as to strengthen national ownership and capacity and seek greater coherence among United Nations system actors, including through joint platforms such as the global focal point for the police, justice and corrections areas in the rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations.

Let me now turn to the second pillar: development. The complex nature of challenges in post-conflict areas requires the combining of forces to target economic, political and social inequalities, using needs-based structural interventions and reforms, social inclusiveness, reintegration and policy advice. It is essential that the needs of the vulnerable, who suffer as a result of conflict, not be ignored.

Furthermore, it is imperative to build resilient societies that are economically and socially empowered. Our own role in this regard should include sharing responsibility and proving our solidarity with those in need. However, humanitarian aid alone will certainly not be enough. National and local actors need to assume responsibility and leadership to the greatest extent possible.

The role of Governments is essential to strengthening investment in human development, including providing better-quality education and access to health care, both of which will contribute to a higher level of development, while equal access creates the opportunity for all to prosper. Policies should facilitate the implementation of universal, adequately funded health-care systems, and provide free and universal primary and secondary education.

It is crucial that discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities in the labour market and in access to public services be prevented. Policies should support

incoming populations by providing necessary basic socioeconomic services.

That brings me to my third point: human rights. There is no successful peace process without full respect for human rights. Respect for human rights means social cohesion. Every member of a society has the right to be equal and secure. Non-respect for human rights in many parts of the world creates instability. Young people also have a place in the human rights pillar. When young people in a region experience great frustration and desperation, the stage is set for destabilization. Fostering the participation of young people is crucial for effective implementation of the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agendas. Equally important is the empowerment of women. Women's meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security is critical.

In conclusion, sustainable peace can only be achieved when all segments of society are empowered and included on an equal basis. Countries in post-conflict transition periods need to develop adequate capacity to take responsibility for their own development, security and stability. In this regard, Poland congratulates the people and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire on the progress they have achieved in the country's post-conflict transformation, which is a cornerstone for long-lasting peace and stability and economic prosperity.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank President Ouattara for travelling to be with the Security Council today.

I would join other speakers in expressing my personal condolences as well as those of my Government and of the Queen on the death of President George H.W. Bush, whom I had the honour to meet a number of times. He was indeed a great statesman. As the President and Mr. Faki Mahamat did, it is also worth noting once more the passing earlier this year of Kofi Annan, another great statesman who worked very closely with President Bush. Both of them had at the heart of what they were trying to achieve everything that this debate is about today. I therefore thank the Côte d'Ivoire delegation for putting it on our agenda. I thank the other Ministers for coming to join us at the Security Council.

I think that it is very good that we have been able to have the benefit of Côte d'Ivoire's own experience. Too seldom in the Security Council do we hear of its successes. We wish the Government of Côte d'Ivoire well in everything it has achieved, and long make it continue. We salute all the reforms that Côte d'Ivoire has brought in.

Another piece of good news that the Council was able to participate in recently concerned the lifting of sanctions on Eritrea. This kind of success in Africa is very much welcome.

A number of speakers have drawn attention to the fact that two-thirds of the armed conflicts that ended in the early 2000s relapsed within five years. It is therefore vital that we remain focused, not just on resolving conflicts, but on sustaining peace in the long term.

I would like to focus my remarks on three key lessons today. First, and as other speakers have noted, a political settlement needs to include the full spectrum of society, including women, including the Polish focus on human rights, including what the Dutch Minister said about women and girls and education. All of this is vital if peace is to be sustainable. We need to be bold in this approach. We recognize that it can often be extremely difficult in the aftermath of a conflict to be magnanimous and reach out to all sectors of society. Nevertheless, it is a very critical element. In the British experience in Northern Ireland, we believe that we were able to accommodate the interests of diametrically opposed armed groups in the political process that has brought two decades of peace.

It is important also that we engage with elites and that we encourage them to take the lead, rise above political, ethnic and religious divides, and take tough choices for the benefit of all of their citizens. It is all on our minds that the peace talks in Yemen are about to start. We look to all participants to approach these talks constructively and in a spirit of compromise.

Secondly, post-conflict power structures and institutions need to be fully representative and legitimate. Fair power structures that broaden inclusion, accountability and transparency over time are more likely to reinforce a sustainable peace. That said, there must be a political agreement. We are all aware that in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan unresolved power struggles undermined ambitious State- and institution-building. Syria becomes even more important in this context. We will not be able to consider providing reconstruction assistance absent a political settlement.

It is also worth pointing to the virtues of patience. The World Bank estimates that making meaningful improvements to institutions takes a minimum of 10 years. The Peruvian representative spelled out the vital importance of getting things like infrastructure right. The conclusion from this idea is that long-term, predictable and coordinated support from the international community as a whole is obviously going to be critical if peace is to last.

Bosnia represents a successful example in that particular context. The success of its transition to a peaceful State over 20 years after the Dayton Accords is noteworthy. This is due in part to the collaboration and support of the Security Council, the European Union, NATO and many others, including civil society and non-governmental organizations. In fact, Paddy Ashdown, who was the High Representative in Bosnia, had three particular lessons for managing the end of a conflict. The first was "Do the rule of law first." His second rule was "Have a plan and stick to it." And his third rule was "Be prepared for it to take a long time." We often approach things in haste, and obviously do not condone backsliding, but the key is to keep moving forward with patience.

Thirdly, we need to ensure that basic needs are provided in the short term, and support economic development in the long term. The provision of basic needs is vital to the alleviation of immedi te post-conflict humanitarian needs, but also to ensure political processes have the capacity to develop and thrive. Development itself needs to be inclusive and create widespread benefits to ensure groups are not inadvertently left behind.

The International Labour Organization's Decent Work Agenda and its Programme on Jobs for Peace and Resilience rightly emphasize the importance of employment-centred recovery and accessible opportunities for society to grow and for cohesion. That all helps to reinforce the Sustainable Development Goals. If we want to ensure that the 2 billion people, who live in countries affected by conflict are not trapped in a cycle of violence, then we must address instability head-on. It was very good to learn of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which will clearly have a key role to play in that regard.

It is impossible to touch on all the ramifications of this important subject, but I thank you again, Mr. President, for sharing Côte d'Ivoire's experience with the Council and for starting a very thorough discussion of the issue.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to welcome and thank you for your presence with us today in the Security Council. We are grateful to the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire for convening this important meeting. We also thank Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for their valuable briefings.

The post-conflict period requires an integrated strategy in the political, security and economic spheres — which are considered fundamental pillars for building and sustaining peace and vital factors for promoting security and stability. Many important elements are required to achieve that, first and foremost political determination, security, stability, sustained funding for early recovery, and lasting medium- and long-term financial investment.

The presence of Côte d'Ivoire in the Council today as a non-permanent member bears witness to the importance of the post-conflict period. Côte d'Ivoire was able to successfully emerge from a serious long-standing crisis once the appropriate political and security environment was established. That was achieved after Côte d'Ivoire undertook serious and effective economic reforms in a number of vital sectors — such as agriculture, industry, mining and investment — that helped avoid a relapse into conflict. The Peacebuilding Commission also played a crucial role in building peace and reconstruction efforts, alongside the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, whose mandate ended in June 2017, as well as the peacekeeping troops of the Economic Community of West African States.

Of the most important steps that should be taken by a State in any post-conflict situation is to embrace national ownership of the peacebuilding operation, as well as sincere political will to achieve national reconciliation while addressing the root causes of the crisis. The vital role played by the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Côte d'Ivoire, which was established in September 2011 and tasked with investigating human rights violations during the conflict, contributed immensely to creating an environment of social harmony and political stability by bringing to justice those responsible for violations of human rights and perpetrators of crimes against

humanity and war crimes. That was a crucial component of the successful transition process in Côte d'Ivoire.

Experience has shown that, following the increase in military conflicts and the difficulties and obstacles faced by the Organization in certain cases, the efforts of the United Nations need support from regional organizations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It is also clear that regional organizations are in many cases better-suited to deal with conflicts owing to the fact that their operations are less costly, both materially and in human resource terms. They are also more capable of analysing information pertaining to maintaining peace and security in their respective regions. Close cooperation and effective partnership between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations are therefore the first line of defence for the United Nations in helping to resolve regional problems, prevent their expansion and avoid threats to international peace and security.

States emerging from conflicts often face economic deterioration, destroyed infrastructure and an inability to provide basic services to their peoples. In order for those States to recover and be able to withstand hardships, the role of international financial institutions is crucial, first and foremost that of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Those institutions, in cooperation and partnership with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, including the Peacebuilding Fund, can contribute to reconstruction, development and job-creation. Those States would then be able to discharge their functions in the best possible way, with a view to achieving sustained economic growth, which represents the best guarantee to avoid a relapse into conflict.

In conclusion, we reiterate our full support for the Secretary-General's reforms and his efforts to restructure the peace and security pillars within the Secretariat. Achieving Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development goals is important in order to establish peaceful societies and build effective institutions.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin by again expressing to our American friends, as President Macron did, our deepest sympathies on the passing away of President George Herbert Walker Bush.

It is a great honour for all of us to host President Alassane Ouattara today. On behalf of France, I would like to warmly thank you, Mr. President, and through you Côte d'Ivoire's presidency of the Security Council, for having taken the welcome initiative of holding this crucial meeting on the issue of post-conflict reconstruction. The fact that this initiative originated from Côte d'Ivoire lends it particular importance and significance.

Côte d'Ivoire is in many ways a model of post-conflict recovery and reconstruction, as well as a source of inspiration for our work here at the United Nations. This meeting also comes at a pivotal moment for the United Nations, with the major reforms under way to the peace and security pillar, which are helping to put the sustainability of peace at the heart of our efforts. In that regard, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for their important briefings, engagement and exemplary partnership.

I will address the three inseparable dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction, namely, economic reconstruction, the reconstruction of institutions and the reconstruction of what I call living together.

My first point concerns the reconstruction of the economic fabric. Repairing what the war destroyed is the first urgent need following a conflict, that is, roads, infrastructure and the means of production. It is about allowing economic life to resume. Montesquieu said that the natural effect of trade was to bring about peace. History has repeatedly shown us that the resumption of economic exchanges is often the best guarantee of lasting peace. The remarkable resurgence of economic activity that Côte d'Ivoire experienced after a decade of civil war is emblematic in that regard. The courageous decisions that you took, Mr. President, greatly contributed to that.

No peace is secure if people do not feel concrete effects in their daily lives. We must also see to it that no one is left behind during the crucial phase of post-conflict reconstruction, including ensuring that growth is sufficiently inclusive so as not to sow the seeds of tomorrow's conflicts. Post-conflict reconstruction relies on the mobilization of all actors, including international financial institutions and multilateral and bilateral donors, but also the private sector. That is how France is directing its efforts as part of its prevention, resilience and sustainable peace strategy, adopted this year, which aims to involve the private sector. It is indeed one of the keys to economic recovery, which is essential to lasting peace. Everyone sees that there can be no lasting peace without sustainable development.

That is why post-conflict reconstruction must fully integrate the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

My second message is about rebuilding institutions. We know that good governance, which of course is itself one of the main goals, also allows societies and States to be more crisis-resilient. Post-conflict reconstruction therefore also means the rebuilding of institutions. It is fundamentally about rebuilding the social contract, in a spirit of Government accountability and the restoration of the rule of law. All the examples demonstrate that judicial institutions have a major role to play in this phase of reconstruction: victims must be able to again turn to the courts with the requisite trust. That is one of the keys to success. The processes of security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are often also essential to rebuild an inclusive, law-abiding army and to return to the State the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. As President Ouattara recalled, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire provided valuable support to the Ivorian authorities in that area.

My third message is about what I referred to earlier as rebuilding living together. After a conflict, especially after a civil war, it is society itself that must be repaired and rebuilt by working to reconcile yesterday's enemies. That is why peace must be prepared for as early as possible, ideally from the beginning of the conflict. In that spirit, we fully support the Secretary-General's reform of the peace and security pillar, which is aimed at better calibrating the mandate of peacekeeping operations and preparing the political solution from the start of a crisis. I also commend the valuable work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as a complement to the work of the Security Council. To succeed, we must also act at the community level in order to facilitate reconciliation on the ground. What happens on the ground is always the gauge of peace. The Peacebuilding Fund is an extremely effective tool for carrying out targeted actions in that regard. Although they are not always visible, they nevertheless remain essential to community reconciliation.

I also welcome the Secretary-General's determination to focus more on young people and women, the latter often being the first victims of conflict. In that respect, I welcome your commitment, Mr. President, to the equality of women and men and the fight against gender-based violence. Discrimination, which perpetuates violence, must be combated without mercy in and of itself, but also because it slows the reconstruction process. Women play an irreplaceable role in re-establishing links and working for reconciliation; but they can exercise that role only if they are guaranteed a safe environment in which their voice is heard. Similarly, involving young people in the peace process means giving a voice to future generations and creating the conditions for a more lasting peace.

France is fully committed, at the bilateral and multilateral levels, to working for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly in the crucial phase of post-conflict reconstruction. For example, France has set up a fund for peace and resilience to support recovery from crisis and restore social cohesion in four regions: the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin, the Iraq-Syria zone and the Central African Republic. The fund, which is partially financed by a tax on financial transactions, is endowed with €100 million per year, an amount that will increase to €200 million annually by 2020.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to echo your call, Mr. President, as well as that of Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, concerning African peace operations. As President Macron reaffirmed in his address to the General Assembly in September (see A/73/PV.6), France fully supports the initiative of the African Union aimed at the adoption of an ambitious draft resolution on African peace operations before the end of the year. That essential initiative has been carried forward by the African Union and the Security Council for several years now. Significant progress has been made since the most recent resolutions adopted on the subject, whether in terms of contributions to the African Union Peace Fund — up to $74 million — or the achievement of human rights compliance frameworks. Our common understanding of the added value of African peace operations and their necessary complementarity with United Nations peacekeeping operations has been strengthened. Today they play a major role on the African continent. It is therefore time to recognize the important efforts undertaken by the African Union and its member States, including the commitment to finance 25 per cent of African peace operations, and allow those operations to enjoy predictable and sustainable financing from United Nations mandatory contributions.

The President (*spoke in French*): I ask the representative of France to convey my gratitude to President Macron for his message to me yesterday.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I wish to join others in expressing our condolences to the people of the United States for the loss of former President George Herbert Walker Bush.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this debate on post-conflict reconstruction.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for their insightful remarks.

Let me start by commending the Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire for their resilience and efforts to restore peace and stability and boost economic growth. Positive stories like your country's, Mr. President, are rare and far apart, but they serve as an important source of hope and guidance to many. Your experiences have also been valuable for our work in the Security Council, including in our joint work regarding the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

Post-conflict reconstruction and transition can be successful only in the context of broader political, economic and social reforms. As this debate has illustrated, there is a multitude of challenges that need to be addressed, including the effects of sexual and gender-based violence. The resulting trauma, stigma, poverty and poor health can echo across generations. In response, socioeconomic integration support is necessary to restore community cohesion. Ensuring justice and reparations for victims remains crucial across the board, as well as being a key component in restoring the fabric of society.

The foundation for such restoration and reconstruction is laid by peacekeeping operations. Formulating appropriate mandates with a comprehensive political solution at the core is key. An exit plan anchored in national development planning processes to ensure national ownership needs to be formulated at an early stage of the mission. Integrated work across the United Nations system is also needed to ensure that transitions are just that — a transition rather than a termination of one kind of support and possibly the beginning of another for reconstruction.

Predictable and coherent peacebuilding during and after transitions, including how we finance the system, is another vital part of a comprehensive approach. The Peacebuilding Fund is an important tool in that regard. The commitment, as formulated in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, to support United Nations agencies, funds and programmes is also critical.

As Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Sweden had the honour to work with Liberia through its transition. As the peacekeeping mission withdrew, the PBC worked to support and enhance national ownership, as well as to sustain international attention, including by mobilizing financial and political support. Many important lessons were learned from the transition in Liberia, and the PBC can now also function as an important platform to share those lessons.

Peace and security must not be seen in isolation, but rather as closely connected to socioeconomic factors that drive both resilience and fragility. The joint United Nations-World Bank report *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* identifies exclusion, inequality and power imbalances as principal causes of conflict and violence. In many countries, growing inequalities fuel social unrest and impede sustainable economic growth. Consequently, policies that strive towards equality, in its broadest sense, create more peaceful societies.

As the economy starts to grow again in the aftermath of conflict, it is important to pay attention to rising economic inequalities. Sweden has introduced the multi-stakeholder initiative Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth, developed in cooperation with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Labour Organization. It builds on the notion that a well-functioning social dialogue and sound industrial relations are key elements for coming to terms with a wide array of societal challenges by forging trust and paving the way for inclusive growth. As part of recovering, it will at some stage also be important to gain capacity to participate in the international trading system in a free, equitable and sustainable way. To eradicate poverty and promote sustainable and inclusive growth and development, we need more trade, not less.

As the Secretary-General pointed out earlier, we need a holistic approach. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the sustaining peace resolutions, offers that framework for long-term

approaches to building societal resilience and tackling the root causes of conflict. It is all there. We know what needs to be done, and we have to do it. In line with the sustaining peace resolutions, we must move away from the sequential approach to conflict, which often results in silos of conflict prevention, humanitarian action, human rights, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, the rule of law and development. And, of course, the women and peace and security agenda is not an add-on, but must be universally integrated if sustaining peace is to be achieved. We thank the Secretary-General for constantly reminding us how critical it is to link the three fundamental pillars of the United Nations, namely, peace and security, development and human rights.

To end where I started — with the Peacebuilding Commission — the PBC is well placed to contribute to this holistic approach; it should be better utilized. The PBC is a key adviser to the Security Council when it comes to sustaining peace. The Commission can convene actors for broader peacebuilding perspectives spanning across the peace and security-human rights-development nexus. It can also assist with regional approaches, work to strengthen national ownership and develop partnerships for innovative solutions.

In its current role as coordinator between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, Sweden has worked to deepen the dialogue between the two bodies. The PBC has made important progress on targeted context-specific advice and engagement in transitions and mandate discussions. We believe that there is broad support for consolidating those gains and solidifying the cooperation between the Council and the PBC. In order to capture best practices and further deepen the dialogue between the Security Council and the PBC, Sweden has presented a draft presidential statement on the Commission's support to the Council's efforts on sustaining peace. We look forward to Council members' constructive engagement on that initiative.

Sweden will continue its cooperation for successful transitions and reconstruction and, by doing so, also remains committed to the sustaining peace agenda.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, on behalf of the Government of Kazakhstan, my delegation joins others in conveying our deepest condolences to the United States and its people on the passing away of a great statesman, former President George Herbert Walker Bush. He was the one who recognized the independence of Kazakhstan after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and will be remembered dearly in our country.

We warmly welcome you to the Chamber, Mr. President, and congratulate you on chairing your delegation's important signature event. We also thank the Ivorian presidency for highlighting the importance of peacebuilding and sustaining peace and giving us an opportunity to learn from its experiences, which range from emerging from a long conflict to holding a seat on the Security Council. We join others in commending this great accomplishment. We also express our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. António Guterres and His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat for their commitment to bringing sustainable peace to Africa.

My delegation would like to offer the following observations based on Côte d'Ivoire's lessons.

Conflicts today are accelerating at an unprecedented pace and intensity and are aggravated by the many new emerging threats — terrorism, extremism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, all forms of illegal trafficking, migration, refugee influxes, human rights violations, unmitigated climate change, deep-seated poverty and multidimensional injustices. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Secretary-General's new agenda for peace, Action for Peacekeeping, and reforms provide us with the most viable way forward. They should further reinforce regional plans, such as Agenda 2063 and the Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, which must be supported by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

Hence peacebuilding and sustaining should be a priority, through a strategic and coherent approach for conflict-prone and -affected countries, from the first early warnings and not as a post-conflict intervention. International attention must be paid to prevention. As United Nations efforts in Côte d'Ivoire proved, we must also overcome prevailing fragmentation and silo-like strategies within the United Nations system itself. The focus on laying the foundation for enduring peace in some challenging areas is critical, such as democracy-building, national security, the rule of law, local governance, public administration, economic and financial structures, social services and reconciliation.

Mediation, negotiations and confidence-building measures between the sides involved to resolve protracted, as well as newly emerging, conflicts are the building blocks of the peacebuilding architecture. They

are best achieved through coordinating the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives and Envoys, in conjunction with regional and subregional organizations, as well as the World Bank and African and European development banks. Bilateral donors and international aid agencies make a vital contribution, supported by South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to capacity- and institution-building and the reintegration of regional and national economies.

Similarly, the changing nature of conflicts demands a new, robust and multidimensional strategy that combines peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development. Such a strategy should include climate mitigation and the conservation of precious natural resources. Those ultimate goals also call for a review of how we shape our mandates and implement them by broadening the concept of peace and stability from State-centred security to people-oriented security — from purely military to non-military security, which includes food, water and energy security — the key drivers of peace. In that process of sustaining peace and reconstruction, the women, youth, peace and security agendas must be overarching and is most crucial. In that regard, Kazakhstan firmly supports predictable and sustainable funding of United Nations-African Union-led peacekeeping operations and proposed a draft resolution on that matter.

Based on our two-year experience in the Council — which included visiting the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, the Lake Chad basin, Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar — or even taking the example of Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan proposes strengthening multilateral system-wide coordination to improve the interlinkages between development and security with investments in education, job creation, health care, a revamped regional approach and the United Nations Delivering as One. This strategy is not new, but a robust combination of those elements can create a universal model to address conflicts and sustain peace in other parts of the world.

We can also envisage creating a new United Nations paradigm for peacebuilding, sustaining peace and development with reflections from my President's *Manifesto: The World. The 21st Century*, which proposes just economic structures among countries to eliminate conflicts by the United Nations centennial in 2045. In addition, through its code of conduct towards achieving a world free of terrorism, Kazakhstan has succeeded in building a platform of 80 countries to jointly implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and eliminate that scourge by 2045.

The First and Second World Wars began as a result of the lack of negotiations and dialogue, which still persists 73 years after the United Nations was founded. My President therefore recently proposed that the main world actors and peace guarantors — such as the United States, Russia, China, the European Union and others — address their differences and find political solutions together to threats to international security and sustainable peace. Kazakhstan believe that such a platform can have a great impact on peacebuilding and sustainable peace.

The United Nations plays an irreplaceable role as the most universal, representative and authoritative Organization in the world. Kazakhstan will steadfastly continue to support the United Nations as the premier security envoy and forerunner of development.

Mr. Amde (Ethiopia): Let me also join others in expressing our deep condolences to the Government and the people of the United States on the passing away of former President George Herbert Walker Bush. He will be remembered as a great diplomat, who sat in this Chamber, and a courageous statesman who, par excellence, exceeded any measurement of dignified leadership of our time.

We thank Côte d'Ivoire for organizing this debate on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We are very pleased, Mr. President, to see presiding over this important meeting. It is a demonstration of your very real commitment to this issue as the leader of a country that has successfully managed to build and sustain peace. We are also very pleased to see Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, with us here today, and thank him for his statement on the African perspective on this topic, to which we fully subscribe. We also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his remarks and the reforms that he is advocating.

It has been rightly emphasized time and again that peace, security, development and human rights are inextricably linked. We therefore require closer collaboration among United Nations organs and other stakeholders to build peace and inclusive societies. It is absolutely essential to have coherence in policy and operations across the whole United Nations system. We must do away with all institutional fragmentation. Only then will we be able to ensure that peacebuilding

and sustaining peace are placed at centre of the United Nations work and activities. That is exactly what the Secretary-General's reform aims to address. When it becomes operational, hopefully next month, it will undoubtedly strengthen our ability to deliver effective and efficient operational support in the field. It will be particularly valuable in those complex security situations where both peacekeeping and special political missions are deployed.

Equally, an important element will be to fully utilize the potential role of the Peacebuilding Commission to convene, link and advise with principal organs of United Nations. We need to scale up the Commission's contribution to make sure that it promotes an integrated, strategic and coherent approach. It is also encouraging to note the comprehensive advice that the Commission provides to the Security Council on regional and country-specific issues. We welcome the Secretary-General's reform in that regard, which underlines the hinge role of the Peacebuilding Support Office in linking peace and security with development and humanitarian efforts.

My country believes that, in order to achieve our aim to sustain peace, we must enhance partnerships with other stakeholders. That should include regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, national Governments and various civil society and private organizations. We should make that active across the whole spectrum of the conflict cycle, including prevention, peacekeeping, special political missions, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Complementing the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, the African Union's peacebuilding efforts on the continent are in line with the implementation of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework, as well as the African Solidarity Initiative. We also hope that the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security will play its relevant role in further strengthening that cooperation for peacebuilding and sustaining peace in Africa. Similarly, we welcome the signing of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development between the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. We certainly hope that, together with the Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, that will offer a comprehensive guide for United Nations and African Union cooperation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

There is a crucial need to strengthen the synergy between the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union to address some of the difficult peace and security challenges that we continue to face, whether with regard to mission transition, early peacebuilding, reconstruction efforts or other areas. In that regard, we welcome the Peacebuilding Commission and the AU Peace and Security Council annual joint consultative meeting in New York in July. In addition, we would suggest that it is time for such meetings to be institutionalized and regularly scheduled.

Let me emphasize that peacebuilding and sustaining peace must ultimately be the responsibility of national efforts. It must be owned nationally and inclusively. Sustaining peace requires the involvement of the Government, the private sector and civil society. The success of Côte d'Ivoire's transition in peacebuilding shows how it can be done. That has been an exemplary case. The role of the United Nations and international partners must always be to help build regional, national and local capacities to sustain peace. Building the necessary confidence among Member States will provide the means to facilitate the implementation and operationalization of this new approach to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on members of the Council to fully support the initiative on African-led peace support operations, which we believe is an integral part of our efforts to strengthen collective security through peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We have no doubt that that will be welcomed and successful.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Tiendrebeogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Let me join other delegations in celebrating the memory of President George Herbert Walker Bush and expressing our deepest condolences to his family and the entire American people.

At the outset, and on behalf of the President of Burkina Faso, Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, I would like to congratulate Côte d'Ivoire on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of December and wish it every success in that role. I commend the Ivorian presidency for convening this high-level debate

on the important topic of post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability. Through me, President Kaboré also wishes to express his gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having invited him to this debate. He regrets not being able to attend due to his work timetable, but wishes Côte d'Ivoire every success in steering the work of the Council.

I wish to commend China for its presidency of the Council in November and for convening, on 15 and 20 November, respectively, a meeting on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (see S/PV.8402) and a briefing on peace and security in Africa (see S/PV.8407). I also like to thank the Secretary-General and Chairperson Faki Mahamat of the African Union Commission, for their informative briefings.

The success of post-crisis reconstruction plans represents an important catalyst for sustaining peace, stability and security in affected countries. The example that Côte d'Ivoire has set in that regard is rich in lessons learned. It has been able to secure a definitive exit from the crisis and implement a policy of post-crisis management. That is the result of the vision and leadership of President Alassane Ouattara and the Ivorian Government, which, at an early stage, identified and implemented appropriate measures to carry out the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and ensure national reconciliation and reconstruction. All of those measures enabled the Security Council, by its resolution 2284 (2016) of 28 April 2016, to end the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire on 30 June 2017, which stands out in the history of United Nations missions, most of which end up with an indefinite mandate and duration. That is a good example for countries emerging from conflict situations — particularly in Africa — and for the Security Council itself.

As the Council is aware, conflicts and crises are often multifaceted. Although not involved in an open armed conflict, Burkina Faso experienced a political crisis in 2014 and 2015 that deeply undermined its institutions and greatly strained its social peace and cohesion. During that period, the country benefited from the mobilization and support of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and the United Nations, through the funds — in particular the Peacebuilding Fund — that supported security sector reform projects, national reconciliation and the resilience of our population. After a period of transition, the newly elected Government had to take that situation into account in the implementation of its 2016 presidential programme towards a national plan for economic and social development. The plan was established in strict accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

With the structural transformation of our economy through the reform of our institutions and the modernization of our administration, the development of human capital and the revalorization of the most buoyant sectors of our economy and labour market, the plan seeks to make Burkina Faso a country of strong growth, sustainability, resilience and inclusivity, while creating decent jobs, in order to consistently respond to the many needs of our people. Our ultimate goal is to create the conditions for inclusive and sustainable development and thereby eradicate the root causes of crises.

However, as Council members are aware and as you recalled, Mr. President, since 2015 Burkina Faso has been confronting a recurrence of terrorist acts that have undermined peace and security in the country, the wider Sahel and the entire West African subregion. Aware that a military response alone is not sufficient to defeat terrorism, in 2017 the Government adopted an emergency plan for the Sahel that seeks to ensure that people in the northern regions and the Sahel — particularly women and young people, the most vulnerable and susceptible to radicalism and extremism — have access to basic social services, employment, education and infrastructure necessary to their well-being. The emergency plan therefore represents a holistic response to the dual socioeconomic and security challenges faced in that part of the country.

The establishment of sustainable peace must also and above all be articulated around the prevention of factors for internal State fragility. Conflicts are costly to States and the international community. There is therefore a need to prevent such conflicts from breaking out, persisting or deteriorating. That requires a combination of national, subregional, regional and international efforts, including those of the United Nations and strategic partners, with the full participation of women, which is indispensable.

This is the appropriate forum in which to commend the important report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and all of the proposals therein (S/2018/43). The report particularly

highlights the important role played by regional and subregional organizations in the peaceful settlement of disputes and welcomes African peacebuilding initiatives, such as the African Union's policy on post-conflict reconstruction and development and the African Solidarity Initiative.

To come back to sustaining peace at the national level, and fully aware that it is the primary responsibility of States themselves, the Government of Burkina Faso maintains an ongoing inclusive dialogue with its social partners towards a peaceful social climate. The creation of the High Council for Social Dialogue and the High Council for Reconciliation and National Unity, as well as the determination of our Government to see the truth flourish, justice prevail and reconciliation take place in a calm atmosphere, form part of that policy.

I recall that, like other Sahel countries, Burkina Faso faces the challenge of preserving peace as a result of terrorist attacks, of which the use of improvised explosive devices has become the most recent mode of operation. It is therefore natural that our countries play an active role in initiatives to establish security in the Sahel, particularly through the establishment of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel). The success of the Force is imperative and a source of hope for the affected populations. We therefore wish to reiterate the necessity that it be placed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. This is also an opportunity for my delegation to reiterate its appeal to the United Nations and all partners to ensure the necessary funding not only for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force, but also the Priority Investment Programme, which was established by the Organization and will hold its first donor and partner coordination conference tomorrow, 6 December, in Nouakchott.

The challenges of peacebuilding and peacekeeping reveal the intrinsic links between peace and security, stability and development. It is therefore necessary that we adopt a holistic approach to the issue if we are to implement appropriate and sustainable responses. As was the case in Côte d'Ivoire, real political will, resolve, vision and leadership, and especially national ownership of the crisis resolution process, as well as the clearly defined support of partners in the international community as a whole, are undoubtedly key to success and will prevent post-conflict countries from falling back into crisis.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would ask the representative of Burkina Faso to convey my gratitude to President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré for having appointed him as the representative of Burkina Faso.

I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Rwanda joins other delegations in conveying its heartfelt condolences and those of our Government to the Government and the people of the United States of America on the passing of President George H. W. Bush. His memory and exemplary qualities have been extolled here by several delegations and we align ourselves with their remarks.

(*spoke in English*)

It is my distinct honour to convey the congratulations of His Excellency Mr. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and Chairperson of the African Union, to Côte d'Ivoire and to you, President Ouattara, for presiding over the Security Council for the month of December. We also thank you for presiding over today's debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for their briefings.

Rwanda fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Mr. Faki Mahamat.

As many have said today, the theme of today's debate is of central importance to our continent. Your country, Mr. President, serves as an example of a nation successfully rising out of conflict. Africa and Rwanda are very proud of what Côte d'Ivoire has achieved within a very short period. The theme for this debate — "Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security, and stability" — reflects a reality of what is taking place not only in your country, but also in several African countries. It is therefore worth taking stock of lessons learned from your own experience.

While the balance sheet of Africa's peace and security dividend is not where we, as Africans, would like it to be, there are major positive developments that point to a bright future for the continent. Let me touch on a few continental issues before turning to a few observations based on Rwanda's experience.

The economic and political consequences of violent conflicts are enormous. They outweigh by far any conceivable investment in post-conflict reconstruction. Those consequences include the loss of life, property

and infrastructure; the collapse of State institutions; insecurity; and often, a completely fractured social fabric. That is what we are dealing with when we look into what is needed to ensure that countries emerging from conflict do not relapse into conflict. We have observed that nations that have been successful in post-conflict reconstruction efforts share four pillars.

The first is leadership — leadership that is ready to make difficult decisions to help people live and work together again, side by side, as mentioned by another delegation. Leadership is central in making sure that post-conflict reconstruction will hold. It must be able to convince people that even if they can exact revenge, it is the worst idea ever for post-conflict reconstruction.

The second pillar is ownership. Post-conflict reconstruction processes can be sustained only if they are owned and led by people, local communities and Governments that concretely and tangibly express the will to truly rebuild and bring people together.

The third pillar is institutions. We cannot overemphasize the centrality of strengthening State institutions to make them inclusive and accountable.

The fourth pillar is partnerships, as has been emphasized by many speakers. It is in the fragile phase of the few years after the end of armed conflict that the support of the international community is needed more than ever. However, that support should be informed by national efforts and support national priorities.

I would now like to share a few observations regarding Rwanda's post-genocide reconstruction experience that, we believe, could also be useful to other nations. In the early reconstruction phase, we focused our efforts on three pillars. The first — security, peace and stability — is the foundation for any possible reconstruction effort. The second pillar is building our institutions, which were completely destroyed. The third pillar is ensuring that people will feel and soon enjoy the development dividend.

The ultimate aim of any post-conflict reform is to create conditions conducive to self-sustaining economic growth and human development while addressing the major risk factors for conflict relapse. One of the key concerns must be ensuring inclusive processes. Very early on, we ensured that women and youth were fully included in the reconstruction process.

The linchpin for post-conflict reconstruction is ensuring the restoration of security for all citizens and the stability of the nation. In the early years, we were able to demobilize and reintegrate more than 10,000 ex-combatants into our communities. Those ex-combatants had been involved in truly damaging conflict, such as killings. Re-engaging them and reintegrating them into our communities was not an easy undertaking because it also required the Government to ensure the security of local communities. However, those are the kinds of decisions that I was alluding to when speaking of leadership that is courageous enough to make some very difficult decisions and choices. You have demonstrated, Mr. President, that you are ready to make those difficult choices and decisions.

The second priority for Rwanda in post-conflict reconstruction was to rebuild our institutions in such a way that they would deliver services to all citizens. In order to achieve that, the rule of law had to take root, the fight against impunity and corruption had to succeed, and we needed to ensure that all people were served equally.

The reconstruction process must be inclusive if it is to take hold. We know that bringing women to peace processes adds value to the agreements reached. It is equally important to bring women on board and ensure that they are involved from very early on in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Finally, people have to enjoy the development dividends of security and stability, which must bring changes to people's living standards if they are to really support the Government's efforts. In that sense, supporting countries that are emerging from conflict situations by investing in their development efforts is really an investment in maintaining peace and security, not only in those countries but in the regions to which they belong. Through the investments made in Rwanda, we have been able to lift millions of people out of poverty. Within a very short period, we have been able to double the country's life expectancy. Those investments must therefore be concrete and very tangible.

All the elements that I have briefly mentioned are complementary, not sequential. They must all be put in place and they cannot be put in place by countries alone. While they of course require the ownership and leadership of countries, they also require support, including the support of this institution. Rwanda's experience shows that when we invest in people, inclusive and accountable institutions and sustainable

development, peace, security and stability can become an irreversible reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would ask the Rwandan representative to convey our gratitude to President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, Chairperson of the African Union, for having responded to our invitation by appointing her to represent Rwanda.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I join others in expressing our deep condolences to the people of the United States for the passing of President George H. W. Bush, the forty-first President of the United States of America.

I would like to express my appreciation to Côte d'Ivoire and President Alassane Ouattara for convening and presiding over this very important debate. It is an honour to be given a chance to speak here today. We believe that this discussion will help keep up the momentum for peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which is one of the most important issues for Japan.

Let me also express my gratitude to Secretary-General Guterres and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for their insightful briefings. I also thank the speakers before me for sharing the experiences of their own countries, which, I believe, has enriched today's debate immensely.

Japan believes that peace is not a transitory thing such as a ceasefire or peace agreement, but rather involves the continuous maintenance of security and stability long after an agreement is signed. A year ago this month, during its presidency of the Council, Japan convened an open debate (see S/PV.8144) that focused on the peace continuum. Speakers at that debate highlighted the importance of taking a comprehensive and integrated approach by embracing perspectives of the peace continuum, as well as the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

In order to achieve peace, security and stability in post-conflict countries, it is essential to build the State's capacity and institutions and to strengthen trust between the State and its people. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace has become an area of high focus across the United Nations system and in particular within the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan stated in 2016 when he presided over the Security Council's open debate (see S/PV.7750) on peacebuilding in Africa, Japan has three principles on peacebuilding in Africa.

First, there is an emphasis on people in the field. That belief goes hand in hand with the concept of human security, which, in partnership with all the relevant actors, aims at protecting and empowering vulnerable individuals with a view towards prevention.

Secondly, living standards must be improved through inclusive economic development. It is crucial to ensure that all people can benefit from the peace dividend.

The third principle is tolerance of diversity. While emphasizing universal values, Japan also respects the importance of ethnic diversity and local ownership.

These principles are in line with the basic philosophy of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD): ownership and partnership. In the run-up to TICAD VII, which will be held in Japan next August, we hosted an eminent persons group to which we invited five former presidents of African countries to participate, and we discussed the challenges and measures towards the realization of peace and stability in Africa. We believe that Côte d'Ivoire is a good example of the peacebuilding and sustaining peace model. It is with great pleasure that Japan is currently implementing a project to promote reconciliation and trust between that State and its people by developing infrastructure and deploying experts.

While we have taken many steps to advance peacebuilding and sustaining peace, there is still much to be done. How can we best utilize the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and bilateral and multilateral ties in order to implement peacebuilding and sustaining peace? How can we leverage our efforts in an effective manner to make a difference on the ground? While there is no silver bullet that can solve all the issues at once, today's debate offers an opportunity to have a deeper discussion on how to move that work ahead. That is why I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. For its part, Japan will continue its support, which includes contributions of both financial and human resources, in order to enhance peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Niang (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I join the other speakers before me in reiterating, on behalf of the people of Senegal, our deepest condolences to the delegation of the United States upon the passing of the prominent statesman and great figure of our time, the late President George Herbert Walker Bush.

Mr. President, let me convey to you the enthusiastic regards of your friend and brother, His Excellency Mr. Macky Sall, President of Senegal, who, for the reasons he personally explained to you during your recent stay in Dakar, was unable to take part in this important debate. He also asked me to once again offer you his warm congratulations on the Ivorian presidency of the Security Council and on your choice of such a relevant theme for today's debate, "Post-conflict reconstruction and peace, security and stability".

I would also like to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, for his strong commitment and judicious reforms and initiatives to promote peace and security in the world. I pay the same tribute to His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for his leadership in the effective engagement of that organization in African situations, whether they are theatres of conflict or theatres of post-conflict. I also welcome the presence of the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mr. Jean-Claude Brou, and commend the important work that ECOWAS is carrying out in promoting peace and stability in our subregion.

I cannot think of a country that would be better suited to lead today's debate than Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, that beautiful country — which was temporarily thrown off course by a crisis that almost wiped out its solid political and institutional foundations — was able to resist and overcome. Today, it has restored its rightful place in the community of nations in the most wonderful way possible. Senegal is linked to Côte d'Ivoire by close ties forged by history and determined by our inescapable common destiny. We are proud to have taken part in the normalization process of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, first, within ECOWAS, at the outbreak of the crisis, and then, within the framework of United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, until the end of its mandate.

Lessons learned from post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in Africa, reveal that the countries concerned are generally politically fragile, their institutions are often weak, their economies are vulnerable, their young people are facing unemployment and their infrastructures often need to be rebuilt. The challenges these countries face throughout the peacebuilding process are colossal. Their needs in terms of assistance are equally enormous, especially with respect to electoral assistance, reform of the justice and security sectors, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), the strengthening of the health and education systems, and the recovery of economic activity and job creation.

For the most part, these are countries where everything needs to be rebuilt following the ravages of war, which, beyond the lives lost and the buildings and infrastructures destroyed, shake the very foundations on which these States are built. As a result, post-conflict reconstruction remains a broad issue of great complexity. Adequately undertaking post-reconstruction therefore requires an approach that is comprehensive, as the Secretary-General said earlier, as well as coordinated, and must take due account of the many security, political, institutional, economic and financial challenges, among others. All these factors are, of course, inextricably linked.

Beyond national reconciliation, stabilizing the security situation in a post-conflict country is certainly a prerequisite for the rest of the reconstruction process. The example of our dear neighbour, Mali, with which we share a common destiny, clearly reveals the negative impact that security problems can have on post-conflict recovery efforts. Stabilizing the security situation must therefore remain a priority in actions undertaken in this context. That is why, in addition to DDR activities, we must also combat the circulation of arms and restructure the defence and security forces into republican forces capable of ensuring order and security in those countries.

While post-conflict reconstruction requires significant resources over long periods of time, funding for peacebuilding activities remains limited, irregular and unpredictable. If peace is to be sustained, the restoration of security must go hand in hand with economic and social development. The lack of sustainable and predictable funding is a major impediment to the implementation of national post-conflict reconstruction programmes. The process of developing such programmes is fortunately increasingly taking into account the principle of national ownership and the involvement of all national stakeholders.

It is therefore necessary to emphasize the importance of maintaining and strengthening the support provided to countries transitioning towards peace so that they can continue to benefit from the attention of the international community, especially in terms of sustainable and predictable funding. This means that the commitments made at donor conferences, which are often slow to materialize, must be fulfilled.

The example of the successful transition in Côte d'Ivoire reminds us that the success of that critical phase of peacebuilding is a fundamental element in preventing relapses into conflict and a guarantee for the return to lasting stability. The transition to sustainable peace is a most demanding undertaking that requires early planning, which must take due account of the conditions and objectives to be achieved in order to allow any peacekeeping operation to succeed. In this respect, it is necessary to ensure from the outset that peacekeeping missions can create the conditions necessary to a smooth transition, including drawdown and withdrawal, without compromising efforts aimed at achieving the long-term goals of peace and stability.

To that end, peacebuilding activities should be developed from the earliest stages of a mission, orienting efforts towards strengthening national capacity, governance and the rule of law, while tackling the deep structural and socioeconomic problems that these countries often face and promoting the maintenance of effective political dialogue and coordination among the various stakeholders. Above all, it is important to work towards the creation of conditions conducive to the transfer of functions to the countries concerned at the time of the peace operation's withdrawal. Admittedly, this is a very difficult endeavour, but also a very achievable one, as evidenced by the successful experience of your country, Mr. President, as well as Sierra Leone and Liberia, among others.

Various speakers today have highlighted efforts undertaken at the international, regional and subregional levels to help conflict-affected countries find their way back to sustainable stability. However, these efforts are often undertaken by various actors whose interventions are not always well coordinated or in harmony, which limits their impact on the ground. Therein lies the advantage of the concept of sustaining peace, the cross-cutting dimension of which calls for the building of synergies — especially among the various relevant actors — to develop coherent and holistic strategies and approaches for promoting lasting peace.

In this vein, the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union and its regional organizations must be strengthened in order to maximize their full potential for sustaining peace. This implies, inter alia, greater interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission and the relevant organs of the African Union in order to develop better coordination and streamline efforts on the ground, thereby enhancing complementarity and eliminating duplication. This also requires joint assessments of the nature of the challenges to peace and security in Africa, which are becoming increasingly complex.

Finally, there must be ongoing dialogue in order to best harmonize support for countries on the peacebuilding agenda.

The President (*spoke in French*): I ask the representative of Senegal to thank President Macky Sall for his hospitality and kind words addressed to me.

Before adjourning this meeting, I wish to thank the members of the Security Council, the international community and the countries we invited to attend for sending their representatives, as well as the members and non-members of the Security Council that spoke today. I also wish to extend special thanks to my brothers Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and Mr. Jean-Claude Brou for coming to be here with us today.

This debate has been particularly rich and enriching. I have learned a great deal by listening to today's speakers. I too would note that reconstruction and reconciliation are long-term endeavours. We need to get to work; we cannot let ourselves believe that we have already won the battle. Relapse is a very real possibility and we must remain highly vigilant. The Government and the people of Côte d'Ivoire will greatly benefit from the important statements, comments and remarks made today. The resolutions that will emanate from our presidency in relation to peacekeeping will be beneficial for everyone, particularly for the African continent. We will endeavour to provide appropriate solutions.

I would like to highlight that this has been a wonderful moment for me and for the people of Côte d'Ivoire. We are very proud to have had this opportunity, for which I thank the Council both personally and on behalf of my delegation.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.